

INSIDE TODAY

WORLD NEWS

UNDER FIRE



A U.S. Marine takes runs through a field after igniting a smoke grenade to mark a landing zone for a U.S. Army Task Force Pegasus helicopter during a medevac mission, in Marjah, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Sunday Feb. 21, 2010.

Read more on Page A6

SPORTS NEWS

GOLDEN BODE



Gold medalist Bode Miller of the United States reacts during the flower ceremony of the Men's super-combined at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Whistler, British Columbia, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Read more on Page A12

Obama version of health reform expected

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House readied its last-ditch effort to salvage health care legislation Sunday while the Senate's Republican leader warned Democrats against the go-it-alone approach.

The White House was expected to post a version of President Barack Obama's plan for overhauling health care on its Web site on Monday, ahead of his critical and daring summit at Blair House on Thursday. The plan, which was likely to be opposed by the Republicans, is expected to require most Americans to carry health insurance coverage, with federal subsidies to help many afford the premiums.

Obama campaigned on the promise to reform the U.S. health care system, but he has so far failed to get a new law enacted. The issue is of critical importance to the United States, which is among the few industrialized nations that doesn't provide universal health care and where more than 40 million people are uninsured.

Hewing close to a stalled Senate bill, it would bar insurance companies from denying coverage to people with medical problems or charging them more. The expected price tag is around \$1 trillion over 10 years.

Continued on Next Page

Portugal floods kill 42, some people feared buried

ARMANDO FRANCA
HAROLD HECKLE

Associated Press Writers

FUNCHAL, Madeira Islands (AP) — Rescue workers in Madeira dug through heaps of mud, boulders and debris Sunday, searching for victims buried by floods and mudslides that have killed at least 42 people on the popular Portuguese island.

Residents looking for missing loved ones were directed by local authorities to the resort's international airport, where a makeshift morgue has been set up. Social services spokesman Francisco Jardim Ramos said not all the bodies had been identified. The center is equipped with psychiatric, psychological and social counseling services, he said.

Continued on Page 8



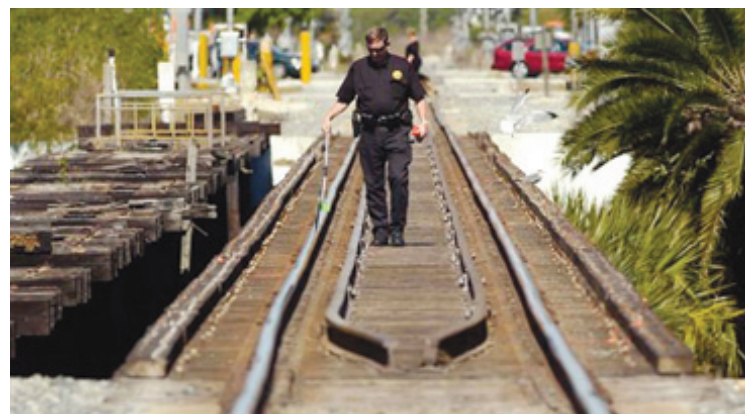
An avenue in downtown Funchal, the Madeira Island's capital, is seen partially collapsed Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010. Part of the avenue gave in Saturday when heavy rains washed rocks and mud down from the hills to the streets of Funchal. The local government confirmed many dead in the flash floods that hit the Portuguese island.

Associated Press



In this Feb. 9, 2010, file photo President Barack Obama speaks in the White House press briefing room in Washington. Obama has summoned both Democrats and Republicans to a White House summit to be cast live on C-SPAN and perhaps cable Thursday, Feb. 25, 2010, gambling that he can save his embattled health care overhaul by the power of persuasion.

Associated Press



Mike Foremny, a Special Agent with the Railroad police, works the scene where three girls were struck and killed by a south bound train on the crane creek Railroad bridge in Melbourne, Fla., Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Associated Press

Read More pn Page 5

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This Jan. 9, 2009, file photo shows the Blair House, the official guest residence across from the White House on Pennsylvania Ave. in Washington, guarded by the Secret Service. President Barack Obama has summoned both Democrats and Republicans to a White House summit at Blair House Thursday, Feb. 25, 2010, to be cast live on C-SPAN and perhaps cable, gambling that he can save his embattled health care overhaul by the power of persuasion.

Associated Press

HEALTH REFORM

Continued from Front Page

The conference at the White House guest residence is to be televised live on C-SPAN and perhaps on cable news networks. It represents a gamble by the administration that Obama can save his embattled overhaul through persuasion — a risky and unusual step.

It was forced on the administration by the Senate

special election victory of Massachusetts Republican Scott Brown in January. He captured the seat long held by Democrat Edward M. Kennedy, who died last year. Brown's victory reduced the Democrats' majority in the Senate to 59 votes, one shy of the number needed to knock down Republican delaying tactics.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said Sunday he

would participate, but that Obama and congressional Democrats would be wrong to push the bills they wrote in the House and Senate.

"The fundamental point I want to make is the arrogance of all of this. You know, they are saying, 'Ignore the wishes of the American people. We know more about this than you do. And we're going to jam it down your throats no matter what.' That is why the public is so angry at this Congress and this administration over this issue," said McConnell.

While the House and Senate had passed its own version of a health overhaul, lawmakers had yet to settle their differences and produce a single bill acceptable to both chambers when Brown won. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican, hoped a compromise — "sweet spot," he called it — was possible.

"If you really want to serve the people and not just your party, I think you will find that sweet spot and you can get it done," he said. Democratic Gov.

Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania appealed to Republicans to offer their own proposals. "You take some of our ideas. We'll take some of your ideas. We may not love your ideas, but we'll take them. If they don't do that, I think this whole dynamic of this political year could turn around," he said. Rendell and Schwarzenegger spoke from the sidelines of the National Governors Association meeting. Four leaders of the group, two Republicans and two Democrats, later summoned the media to a news conference and offered to strike a compromise between the warring factions in Washington. "We are making an offer to help and are very willing to roll up our sleeves and help if that's what Congress and the president decided," said Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen, a Democrat. The governors' plea was an implicit acknowledgment that Obama and the Democratic-led Congress have frozen governors out of the process. The Blair House meeting takes place nearly a year after Obama

launched his drive to remake health care — a Democratic agenda item for decades — at an earlier summit he infused with a bipartisan spirit. The president will point out that Republicans have supported individual elements of the Democratic bills.

Under the expected Obama plan, regulators would create a competitive marketplace for small businesses and people buying their own coverage. The plan would be paid for with a mix of Medicare cuts and tax increases. It would also strip out special Medicaid deals for certain states, while moving to close the Medicare prescription coverage gap and making newly available coverage for working families more affordable. The changes would cost about \$200 billion over 10 years. It's unclear what the total price tag for the legislation would be; the Senate bill was originally under \$900 billion.

McConnell spoke on "Fox News Sunday." The governors appeared on ABC's "This Week." □

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Authorities charge two men in Texas church fire

TYLER, Texas (AP) — Two men who once attended church together were charged Sunday with intentionally burning down a church in east Texas and are suspected in a string of similar blazes, authorities said.

Jason Robert Bourque, 19, and 21-year-old Daniel George McAllister face one count of felony arson for a church fire in rural Smith County near Tyler, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) east of Dallas, said Tom Crowley, spokesman for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Bond is set at \$10 million apiece. They could face life in prison if convicted.

“Because they are charged with one doesn’t mean they’re not going to be charged with some of the others,” Crowley said.

Bourque, of nearby Lindale, was arrested early Sunday in Van Zandt County, site of four of 10 church fires in east Texas this year that authorities believe were intentionally set, Crowley said.

McAllister was taken into custody in San Antonio, where Crowley said he had recently moved.

He said Bourque and McAllister used to attend First Baptist Church in McAllister’s hometown of Ben Wheeler.

The arrests were triggered

by a telephone tip, although the suspects had been on the radar for several weeks, Crowley said.

One of the men was linked to the fire with DNA evidence, Crowley said. He said he had no other details on the DNA.

Officials declined to discuss a motive at a news conference Sunday. No injuries have been reported in the fires.

The outbreak started with a blaze at a church in Athens, and Crowley said another New Year’s Day fire not far away has been added



In this photo provided by Smith County Sheriff Department, Daniel George McAllister, 21, left is shown. McAllister and Jason Robert Bourque, 19, right, were arrested in a series of east Texas church fires that authorities believe were intentionally set.

Associated Press

to the list of 10 suspected arsons in east Texas. A fire in the central Texas town of Temple, brings to 11 the statewide total of fires authorities believe are attributable to arson.

Authorities have said the federal investigation kicked in after two churches burned Jan. 11 in Athens. Less than a week later, four fires in

five days was reported. The two most recent fires included the one that resulted in charges against Bourque and McAllister. □

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Senator: Republicans may support jobs bill



Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky. gestures during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010, to discuss President Obama's fiscal 2011 federal budget. From left are, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, McConnell, Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., and Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas.

Associated Press

ANDREW TAYLOR, Sunday that Republican
 Associated Press Writer lawmakers "may well" vote
 WASHINGTON (AP) — The for a jobs bill, though it's not
 Senate Minority Leader said clear whether they will allow

a Democratic measure to advance right away.

Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky prefers a costlier version drafted with Republican input and he didn't commit his support to advance the legislation on Monday to a final vote this coming week.

The pending measure would provide businesses that hire the unemployed a one-year break from payroll taxes and a \$1,000 tax credit if those workers stay on the job for a full year. The tax breaks would cost about \$13 billion.

The measure would extend a tax break for small businesses buying new equipment, provide an additional \$20 billion infusion of highway and transit money, and help

states and local governments finance big public works projects. Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid of Nevada upset Republicans this month when he scrapped a bipartisan measure that had many more proposals that weren't directly aimed at boosting job growth. Reid dumped business tax breaks and other items on wish lists sought by lobbyists. But he also took out provisions to extend unemployment insurance for the long-term jobless and health insurance subsidies for the unemployed that expire on Feb. 28.

A key test vote looms Monday. It would take at least one Republican to advance Reid's pared back bill to a final vote on Wednesday.

McConnell told reporters after his television appearance that he hopes the measure could advance in a couple of weeks. But to do so means Republicans would have to use a procedural maneuver known as a filibuster to block a final vote on Reid's take-it-or-leave-it approach, which could allow them to seek to restore provisions that have been dropped.

But a Reid spokesman, Rodell Mollineau, said Sunday that Reid won't bring back the full version negotiated between Sens. Max Baucus, a Montana Democrat, and Charles Grassley, an Iowa Republican, which Reid criticized on a Nevada news program last week. □

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Schwarzenegger knocks anti-stimulus Republicans



In this photo provided by ABC, California Gov. Schwarzenegger speaks during an appearance on ABC's This Week in Washington, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010. On health care Schwarzenegger said that if Washington lawmakers really want to serve the public, they'll try to find "that sweet spot" of agreement. At left, host George Stephanopoulos.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON back at members of his
 (AP) — California's party for attacking President
 Republican Gov. Arnold Barack Obama's economic
 Schwarzenegger is hitting recovery plan.

Schwarzenegger says last year's \$862 billion stimulus plan is "terrific" and has created 150,000 jobs in his state and says that Republicans who criticize the recovery measure while seeking stimulus dollars for their states and congressional districts are playing politics.

Opposition to the stimulus plan is nearly universal among top national Republicans like former presidential candidate Mitt Romney — who says it hasn't created private sector jobs — and Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, who calls Obama's plan a big waste of money.

Schwarzenegger made his comments on ABC TV's "This Week." □



Train kills 3 teen girls crossing bridge

MIKE SCHNEIDER

Associated Press Writer

MELBOURNE, Florida (AP) — After goofing around downtown, four teenagers marched past a “no trespassing” sign and braved a railroad trestle that spans 200 feet (60 meters) over a creek. As they joked around and took pictures at the bridge’s halfway point, an oncoming train barreled down the tracks, its whistle howling alarm. Onlookers yelled for the teens to run or jump into the slow-moving water 20 feet (6 meters) below, but only a young boy could sprint to safety. The three others, all girls, were killed Saturday as the sun set over Crane Creek, police and witnesses said.

The teenagers had been hanging out in Melbourne’s downtown area — known for its shops and nightclubs — when they decided to cross the trestle around 6:30 p.m., Lt. Curtis Barger said. Their parents had dropped them off at a mall, and then they took a bus downtown where they were “just goofing off,” he said, without elaborating.

Bruce Dumas, 53, was fishing under the bridge when he saw the teens walk onto the trestle. He warned

them to be careful, but he said they didn’t pay much attention to him.

“You know how kids are,” Dumas said. “They probably wanted pictures of themselves on the track.”

Dumas said he heard the train’s whistle, then the sound of the brakes. After impact, he heard a girl screaming and crying.

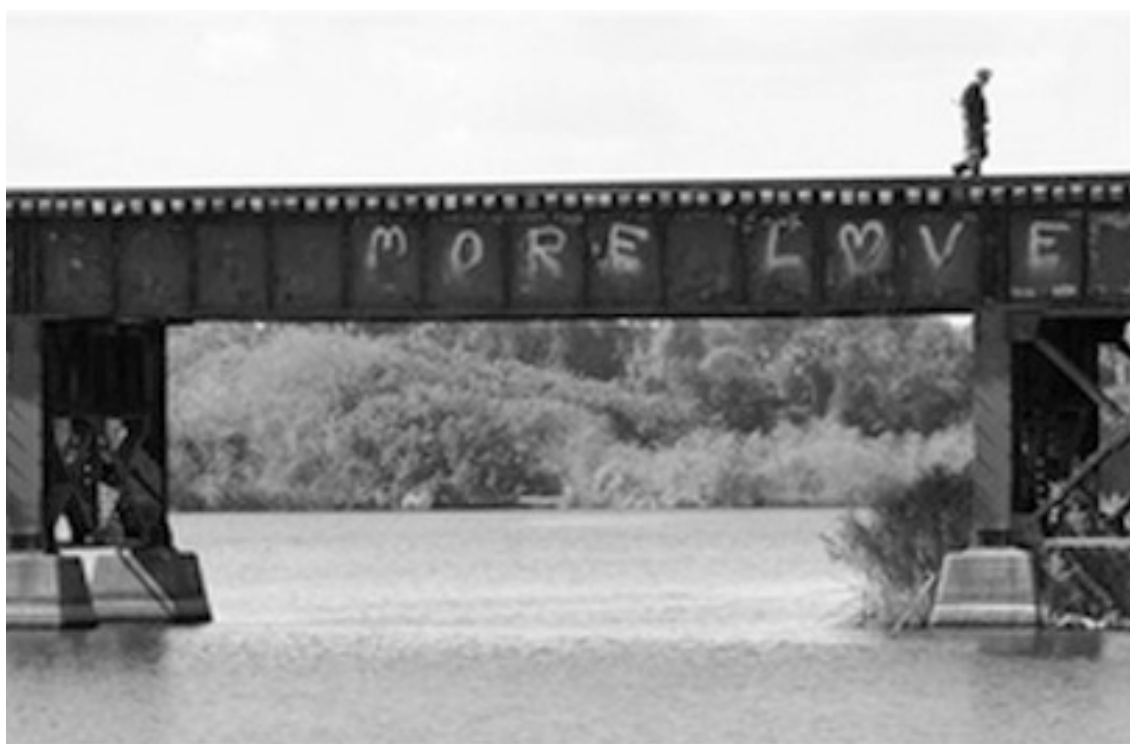
“I think the train was on them so fast they froze and didn’t know what to do,” Dumas said. “It’s crazy to watch a young life snuffed out like that. They didn’t have a chance to live yet.”

The teens could have jumped onto an old, rusty trestle next to one they were on, though it was unclear why they didn’t.

Another fisherman, Charlie Foust, shouted at the teenagers to jump into the water.

“When they heard the train coming, they started running toward the other side,” Foust told Florida Today. “It’s sad. They were just kids. They probably got scared and didn’t know what to do.”

Barger said all the teens were from the area, but their identities weren’t likely to be released until Monday, after officials can compare dental records.



Ralph Smith said one of the teens killed was his niece, Jennifer Reichert, who was 15. He did not want to comment any further.

On Sunday, there was little evidence of the tragedy. A concrete post says, “Private property, no trespassing.” Another sign had fallen onto the ground and was covered in gravel, and a third was twisted and difficult to see. John Vallee, 54, lives near the trestle and was watching TV when he heard a loud screech. He told the Florida Today newspaper he went outside and first thought he saw a blanket tangled under a rail car. Then he realized it was a person.

“It’s going to be hard for me to get to sleep,” Vallee said. “I can’t get it out of my mind.” □

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Outgunned Taliban mounting tough fight in Marjah

ALFRED de
MONTESQUIOU

Associated Press Writer

MARJAH, Afghanistan (AP) — Outnumbered and outgunned, Taliban fighters are mounting a tougher fight than expected in Marjah, Afghan officials said Sunday, as U.S.-led forces converged on a pocket of militants in a western section of the town. Despite ongoing fighting, the newly appointed civilian chief for Marjah said he plans to fly into the town Monday for the first time since the attack to begin restoring Afghan government control and winning over the population after years of Taliban rule.

With fighter jets, drones and attack helicopters roaring overhead, Marine and Afghan companies advanced Sunday on a 2-square-mile area where more than 40 insurgents were believed holed up.

"They are squeezed," said Lt. Col. Brian Christmas, commander of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment. "It looks like they want to stay and fight but they can always drop their weapons and slip away. That's the nature of this war."

U.S. officials signaled their intention to attack Marjah, a major Taliban supply and opium-smuggling center, months ago, apparently in hopes the insurgents would flee and allow the U.S.-led force to take over quickly and restore an Afghan government presence.

Instead, the insurgents rigged Marjah with bombs and booby traps to slow the allied attack, which began Feb. 13. Teams of Taliban gunmen stayed in the town, delivering sometimes



From left, U.S. Army Sgt. Erik Grafford, 22, from Missoula, Mont., sniper, Sgt. U.S. Ryan Mack, 25, from Defiance, Ohio, spotter and Spc. Thomas Leuthold, 20, from Hills, Minn. all of the the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, aim their guns toward Taliban insurgents during a firefight in the Badula Qulp area, West of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Associated Press

intense volleys of gunfire on Marine and Afghan units slogging through the rutted streets and poppy fields. Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said the U.S. and its allies had expected the Taliban to leave behind thousands of hidden explosives, which they did. But they were surprised to find that so many militants stayed to fight.

"We predicted it would take many days. But our prediction was that the insurgency would not resist that way," Azimi told The Associated Press in Kabul.

In a statement Sunday, NATO acknowledged that insurgents were putting up a "determined resistance" in various parts of Marjah, although the overall offensive is "on track."

Marine spokesman Lt. Josh Diddams said Sunday that Marines and Afghan troops were continuing to run into "pockets of stiff resistance" though they were making progress. Diddams said no area is completely calm yet although three markets in town — which covers about 80 square miles — are at least partially open.

"Everywhere we've got Marines, we're running into insurgents," Diddams said. In many cases, the militants are fighting out of bunkers fortified with sandbags and other materials.

Before the assault, U.S. officers said they believed 400 to 1,000 insurgents were in Marjah, 360 miles (610 kilometers) southwest of Kabul. About 7,500 U.S. and

Afghan troops attacked the town, while thousands more NATO soldiers moved into other Taliban strongholds in surrounding Helmand province.

It was the largest joint NATO-Afghan operation since the Taliban regime was ousted from power in 2001.

NATO's civilian chief in Afghanistan, Mark Sedwill, said the military operation was moving slowly "because of essentially the ruthlessness of the opponent we face and the rules that we've set for ourselves" to protect civilians. "We could have swept through this place in a couple of days but there would have been a lot of casualties," he said.

NATO said one service member died in a roadside bombing Sunday, bringing the

number of international troops killed in the operation to 13. At least one Afghan soldier has been confirmed dead. Senior Marine officers say intelligence reports suggest more than 120 insurgents have died.

The Marjah operation is a major test of a new NATO strategy that stresses protecting civilians over routing insurgents quickly. It's also the first major ground operation since President Barack Obama ordered 30,000 reinforcements to Afghanistan.

Gen. David Petraeus, who oversees the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, said on NBC's "Meet The Press" that Marjah was the opening salvo in a campaign to turn back the Taliban that could last 12 to 18 months.

In a setback to that strategy, the Dutch prime minister said Sunday that his country's 1,600 troops would probably leave Afghanistan this year. Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende spoke a day after his government collapsed when a coalition partner insisted the Dutch troops leave in August as planned.

Most Dutch troops are stationed in Uruzgan province, which borders Helmand to the north. Afghan officials expressed concern that Taliban fighters driven out of Helmand could regroup in Uruzgan without a robust NATO presence.

During Sunday's fighting, Marines found several abandoned Kalashnikov rifles along with ammunition hidden in homes, suggesting that insurgents intended to blend into the local population and fight back later. □

Former leaders Bush, Blair attend Nigeria ceremony

JON GAMBRELL

Associated Press Writer

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Former world leaders George W. Bush and Tony Blair joined Nigeria's elite at a ceremony honoring the political and business establishment Sunday, but one honoree's absence highlighted the endemic corruption and other problems plaguing the oil-rich nation.

Hosted by a Nigerian newspaper mogul Nduka Obaigbena, the ceremony included an award for former anti-corruption investigator Nuhu Ribadu, who investigated top ruling-party politicians. But family members had to accept the award for Ribadu who left Nigeria for the United States after being fired from his job

and the target of a drive-by shooting.

Ribadu once estimated corruption cost Nigeria — a nation where most people live on less than \$2 a day — over \$380 billion since independence. Yet little has been done to stem that flow. "We have in Nigeria in particular a system appreciated by Nigerians but no one else — an idea of dependence" on patronage and graft, former President Shehu Shagari told those gathered Sunday at the ThisDay Awards. "It has to be fought against in this country or we will not have progress."

How to change that system is an open question in a country where some former military leaders remain active in politics. Invited guest former

President Bush sat alongside former dictator Muhammadu Buhari, a general who had government critics detained and passed laws allowing for indefinite detentions without trial.

Neither Bush nor Blair spoke at the event, but former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice briefly touched on the corruption plaguing Nigeria in her speech.

Rice called on Nigeria to hold honest and transparent presidential elections scheduled for 2011.

However, some lawmakers have suggested moving the election up after vice president Goodluck Jonathan took over for President Umaru Yar'Adua, who is receiving medical treatment in Saudi



Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair Left, Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, on Blair's left, and Religion Leaders hold a Mosquito net with a women lying inside to demonstrate the use of the net against malaria in Abuja, Nigeria, Saturday Feb. 20, 2010. Blair participated first hand, in the work of The Largest Muslim and Christian alliance in Africa led by the Nigerian government, the world bank and the center for interfaith Action on Global poverty.

Associated Press

Arabia.

Blair, Bush and Rice all met with Jonathan at different times over the weekend. After his meeting with Bush, a statement by Jonathan promised the coming elections "will be credible."

Also Sunday, police detained activist Shehu Sani of

Civil Rights Congress in Nigeria and about 30 others peacefully protesting Blair and Bush's roles in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Sani said the police held him for several hours before he posted bail on charges of incitement and creating a public disturbance. □



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A man is helped while trying to cross a flooded street in Funchal, the Madeira Island's capital, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010. Heavy rain caused flash floods all around the Portuguese island and the local government has confirmed 32 dead.

Associated Press

PORTUGAL FLOODS

Continued from Front Page

More than 120 other people were injured and an unknown number were missing, possibly swept away or smothered, authorities said, adding the death could still rise. Of 248 people who were forced to flee their homes for temporary shelters, 85 have been allowed to return home, Ramos said. Late Sunday, a spokeswoman for the British Foreign office

confirmed that a British national had died, but declined to give further details. The spokeswoman spoke on condition of anonymity in line with department policy.

The Foreign Office also said a small number of Britons had been hospitalized on Madeira. The island is popular with British tourists, who for centuries have regarded wines made in Madeira as a luxury product.

The worst storm to hit Madeira since 1993 lashed the south of the Atlantic Ocean island, including the capital, Funchal, Saturday, turning some streets into torrents of mud, water and rolling debris.

"We heard a very loud noise, like rolling thunder, the ground shook and then we realized it was water coming down," said Simon Burgbage, of Britain. Madeira is the main island, with a population of around 250,000, of a Portuguese archipelago of the same name in the Atlantic Ocean just over 300 miles off the west coast of Africa.

The flash floods were so powerful they carved paths down mountains and ripped through the city, churning under some bridges and tearing others down. Residents caught in the torrent clung to railings to avoid being swept away. Cars were tossed about by the force of the water; the battered shells of overturned vehicles littered the streets.

"It was horrible, there were cars on rooftops, there were

vans and trucks that had fallen and been totally crushed," said German tourist Andreas Hoisser.

The raging water swept a fire truck downstream, slamming it into a tree.

Funchal residents and visitors must now contend with a lack of fresh water until destroyed infrastructure is repaired, the head of water services said.

"One of the main conduits of the city, which is upstream of most of the public distribution systems, has simply disappeared," said Pimenta de Franca. The death toll "will likely increase, given the circumstances of this flood," Ramos said, adding there were "great difficulties" with communications on the island since phone lines were ripped out by the deluge.

"People are scared, some have lost loved ones and things are very complicated because of that," said Madeira-born Luisa Jardin.

Firefighters used pumping equipment to try to drain an underground parking garage at

a downtown department store close to where the heaviest floodwaters descended. Local authorities feared shoppers may have been trapped below ground by the deluge.

"The store is totally destroyed, damaged, full of slurry," said owner Joao Andrade.

A medical team backed up by divers and rescue experts arrived Sunday aboard a C-130 transport plane at the archipelago, 550 miles southwest of Lisbon. The plane was also carrying telecommunications equipment. Once telephone communications are restored it will be easier to discover who is missing, Ramos said.

The sun begun shining Sunday morning, making it easier for rescue workers to move around roads and bridges damaged by floodwaters and littered with uprooted trees, cars and boulders which hampered search and rescue efforts.

By midday Sunday, tourists could be seen strolling and taking photographs in Funchal □

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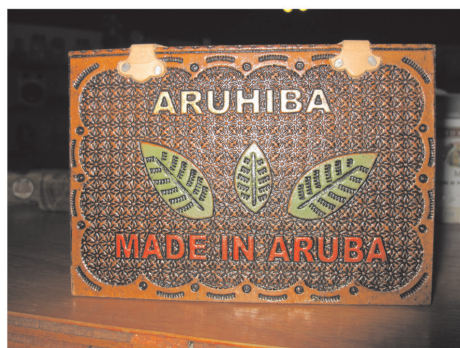
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ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba.



Petrocchi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The process took ten years. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar box is specially designed for the cigars with the logo "Aruhiba".

Petrocchi considers Aruhiba a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars. The company sells International cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five cigars and you will get 1 FREE cigar of \$35. Located at the Historic Dutch Windmill. Open on Sunday from 9am to 8pm. And also at Tamarijn Hotel open from 9am to 1pm. Aruhiba is only available in above mentioned stores. Visit our authentic tobacco farm where cigars are handmade.



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West Bank shrines added on Israeli heritage list

IAN DEITCH

Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel is adding two key West Bank holy shrines to its list of national heritage sites, the prime minister said Sunday, staking a claim that angered Palestinians, who want Israel out of the West Bank.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, addressing a session of his Cabinet at a heritage site in the Israeli Galilee, said the two sites were late additions to the list, reflecting pressure from settlers and other nationalists to widen the heritage category to include Old Testament sites in the West Bank.

One of the sites, in the city of Hebron, has been a flashpoint for decades. Jews call it the Cave of the Patriarchs, where the Bible says the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were buried along with three of their wives.

Muslims call it the al-Ibrahimi mosque, reflecting the fact that Abraham is considered

the father of both Judaism and Islam.

Hebron is a focus of violence because it is the only place in the West Bank where Jews live among Palestinians. About 500 Israeli settlers, some of them extremists, live in enclaves near the disputed holy site, guarded by Israeli soldiers who control part of the city where about 170,000 Palestinians live.

The other new heritage site is the traditional tomb of the biblical Rachel on the outskirts of Bethlehem, about 12 miles (20 kilometers) north of Hebron. Israel's West Bank separation barrier juts into Bethlehem to put the site under Israeli control. The 30-foot (8-meter) high concrete wall is a constant irritant to Palestinians there, who reject Israel's claims that the barrier is meant to keep out attackers and consider it a land grab.

Altogether, about 150 sites are on the national heritage list. Netanyahu convened his Cabinet at Tel Hai, location of a

legendary 1920 battle between early Jewish settlers and Arab attackers.

The prime minister, who angered settlers by agreeing under U.S. pressure to slow settlement construction, said the two West Bank sites must be preserved because they show Israel's ancient ties to the land.

"Our existence here doesn't just depend on the might of the military or our economic and technological strength," Netanyahu said. "It is anchored first and foremost in our national and emotional legacy."

Palestinian Authority spokesman Ghassan Khatib condemned the decision and warned it could take the Israel-Palestinian conflict in a dangerous direction.

"We believe that this particular violation is very dangerous because it might add to the religious nature of the conflict," Khatib said. Palestinians claim the West Bank as part of their future state. Netanyahu



spokesman Mark Regev said the list was not meant to draw borders. "The purpose of the list ... is to single out sites that are of great importance to the Jewish people," he said.

Israeli settlers and their backers, who oppose giving up control of any of the West Bank, were pleased with the move and said they would press for additional biblical sites to be added to the list. Arie Eldad, a lawmaker from the hardline National Union party, toured the Hebron site Sunday.

"There is no Israeli heritage without the Bible, there is no Zionism without the Bible," Eldad told Israel Radio. "This is the real birthplace of the Jewish people, here it all began."

Also in the West Bank, about 50 Jewish settlers stormed into the town of Jericho in the Jordan River valley late Sunday, heading for an ancient synagogue. The military said Israeli soldiers were sent to the area, though it is under Palestinian control, and removed the settlers. □




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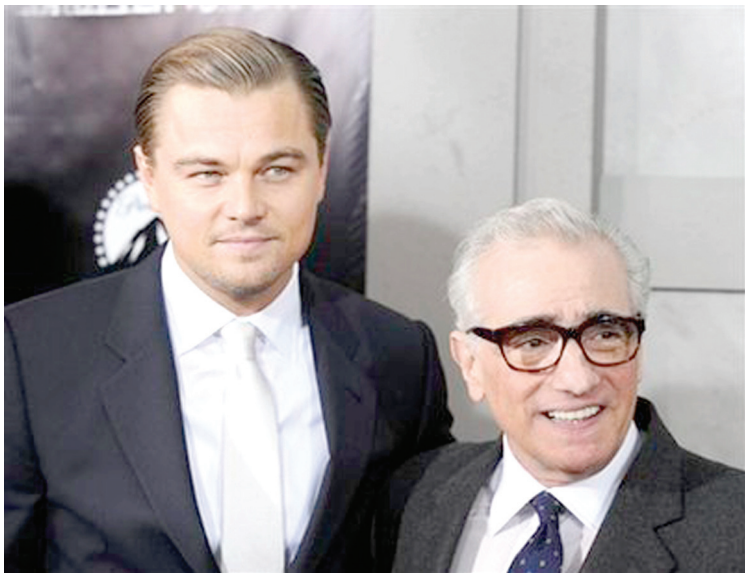


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'Shutter Island' makes waves with \$40.2M debut



Actor Leonardo DiCaprio, left, and director Martin Scorsese attend the premiere of 'Shutter Island' at The Ziegfeld Theatre, in New York, on Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2010.

(AP Photo/Peter Kramer)

By DAVID GERMAIN,
AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio's voyage to "Shutter Island" has landed them at No. 1 at the weekend box office. Their creepy crime thriller set at a remote insane asylum opened with \$40.2 million, according to studio estimates Sunday. A Paramount Pictures release, "Shutter Island" is the fourth collaboration for Scorsese and DiCaprio and the best opening yet for both the director and star. Scorsese's previous personal best was \$26.9 million with his 2006 Academy Awards champ "The Departed," which also starred DiCaprio. The biggest previous debut for DiCaprio was \$30.1 million for 2002's "Catch Me If You Can." Along with "The Departed," DiCaprio and Scorsese also worked together on "Gangs of New York" and "The Aviator," both of them earning best-picture nominations at the Oscars. "The two of them have great chemistry, and you see it on screen," said Rob Moore, vice chairman at Paramount. Roman Polanski's thriller "The Ghost Writer" got off to a big start in limited release, pulling in \$179,000 at four theaters in New York City and Los Angeles for a whopping average of \$44,750 a cinema. That compares to a \$13,440 average in 2,991 theaters for "Shutter Island."

The film likely benefited from months of press coverage over Polanski's arrest in Switzerland last fall and his

possible extradition to the United States, which he fled in 1978 after pleading guilty to unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor.

"If not for the notoriety in his public life, no, I don't think this would have done as well," said Paul Dergarabedian, box-office analyst for Hollywood.com. "It put a spotlight on Polanski, maybe not for all the right reasons. But they say there's no such thing as bad publicity, especially when it comes to marketing a movie." Released by Summit Entertainment, "The Ghost Writer" stars Ewan McGregor in the title role, a man hired to punch up the dreary memoirs of a former British prime minister (Pierce Brosnan) who has been accused of ordering the abduction of terrorism suspects and handing them over for torture by the CIA.

The previous weekend's top movie, the all-star romance "Valentine's Day," slipped to No. 2 with \$17.2 million, falling a steep 69 percent from its \$56.3 million debut. The Warner Bros. release raised its total to \$87.4 million after 10 days in theaters.

The science-fiction sensation "Avatar" is still going strong after two months in theaters, coming in third with \$16.1 million and raising its record domestic total to \$687.8 million. Worldwide, the 20th Century Fox film has taken in \$2.47 billion.

Adapted from Dennis Lehane's novel, "Shutter Island" stars DiCaprio as a U.S. marshal caught up in conspiracies and

delusions while investigating the disappearance of a patient at a hospital for the criminally insane. "Shutter Island" had been scheduled for release last October and was considered

a potential Oscar contender given the awards success of Scorsese and DiCaprio's earlier collaborations. Just six weeks before the planned release last fall,

Paramount abruptly bumped "Shutter Island" to February, the studio calling it an economic decision that would increase the film's profit potential. □

Vegas hotel unveils Elvis extravaganza



In this photo provided by the Las Vegas News Bureau, Priscilla Presley walks the 'Blue Carpet' at the world premiere of Viva Elvis, the newest show by Cirque du Soleil on the Las Vegas Strip, at Aria Resort & Casino in City Center, in Las Vegas Friday Feb. 19, 2010.

(AP Photo/Las Vegas News Bureau, Glenn Pinkerton)

By LINDA DEUTSCH,

AP Special Correspondent

LAS VEGAS — Three decades after Elvis Presley took his last bow on the Las Vegas Strip, where he once reigned as king, the magicians of Cirque du Soleil have tried to summon back the power of this supreme entertainer in a show titled, "Viva Elvis." They have mixed a dizzying array of dance, acrobatics, live musicians, over-the-top stage sets, and glitzy costumes with gigantic videos of Elvis in his most legendary performances and memorable life events. In the words of an Elvis song, the result is "Too Much."

It's as if we're watching two different shows — the circus performances that are the Cirque franchise and a tribute to Elvis that would have stood on its own.

The 45 candy-colored, whimsically designed jumpsuits worn by a dance troupe are fun to watch. And the show has 120 costume changes, including a Follies-like Las Vegas number.

But for all the energy, skill and effort evident on stage,

the most riveting segments of "Viva Elvis" are the videos in which the Presley charisma is as mesmerizing as ever. When Elvis is on the huge screen in simple black and white, you can't take your eyes off of him. And the nearby live performers trying gamely to get attention with their colorful dances and acrobatics are seriously upstaged.

Only when Elvis disappears entirely, as in a beautifully staged trampoline act featuring comic book super heroes (a comparison to Elvis that's a stretch), do the acrobats have a chance to shine.

Friday night's premiere before a star-studded audience of 1,800 at the specially designed Elvis theater in the new Aria Hotel got off to a rocky start when, in the middle of the first number, house lights went on, the stage went dark and there was an announcement that an alarm had gone off.

After a five-minute break, the show resumed to sighs of relief. Videos were projected in a gigantic juke box frame as Elvis' voice filled the theater singing "Blue Suede Shoes." Scenes from his concerts, the hysteria of his fans, and his TV appearances set the stage for a retrospective of his life. But as the video rolled, dancers cavorted on stage, a pink Cadillac rolled in, and a gigantic blue suede shoe appeared with acrobats hanging from it.

Other extravagant numbers included a medley of Elvis' early songs with monument-sized recreations of Elvis in cowboy garb aiming a pistol — the same image from the movie "Flaming Star" seen in a classic Andy Warhol painting. But the size was befitting an Egyptian pharaoh. The famous "Jailhouse Rock" dance was performed on a 40-foot-high cell block by dozens of dancers and acrobats, some dancing upside down.

The silliest production number of all involved a mammoth wedding cake for Elvis and Priscilla. A woman on top sang "Can't Help Falling in Love," while couples performed ballet at the base and dancers on roller skates whirled around them. As if there wasn't enough going on, a voluminous bridal train enveloped the cake and reflected blurry photos of Elvis and Priscilla on their wedding day. It gave new meaning to the term over the top.

Among the most successful segments was one dealing with Elvis' time in the Army. Male dancers in uniform swing danced with girls dressed as love letters, while newspaper headlines about Elvis' draft were projected on the back wall. Videos of his induction, including a shot of his mother in tears, provided the kind of emotion that makes Elvis' personal story so compelling. But the only attempt at a narrative came from a caricature of Elvis' manager, Col. Tom Parker — a poor choice for this kind of insight, since his role in Elvis' story remains a subject of controversy.

The recordings of Elvis classics have been skillfully remixed, making them sound more contemporary than ever, and the decibels are cranked up high.

Before the show began, Priscilla Presley, who was an adviser on the production, said in a brief interview that she hoped, "This tribute will help to tell a new generation about Elvis. The younger kids will get to know Elvis."

She may be right. The show provides enough sensory overload to lure young audiences. The rest of us can hope that it is a work in progress and will be refined as months go by.

We can also be thankful for small mercies: at least there are no Elvis impersonators. □



Schlumberger to buy Smith Int'l for \$11 billion

By DAVE CARPENTER,
AP Business Writer

Schlumberger Ltd., the world's biggest oilfield services company, has agreed to purchase fellow industry player Smith International Inc. for about \$11 billion in stock in a move to diversify its product offerings and better compete with rival Halliburton Co. The deal, announced Sunday, boosts Schlumberger's portfolio just as business is beginning to recover. Smith, based in Houston, makes drilling tools, bits and other products for the oil and gas industries.

Schlumberger, which has main offices in Paris, Houston and The Hague, Netherlands, slumped during the global recession that weakened energy demand and discouraged drilling operations around the world. But prices have since rebounded, and the company said in its most recent earnings report in January that its business will benefit as recovering countries burn more fuel.

Under terms of the transaction, Smith stockholders will receive 0.6966 of a Schlumberger share for each share held. Based on Schlumberger's closing stock price Friday of \$63.90, that values Smith shares at \$44.51 each. Based on Smith's 247.4 million shares outstanding, the all-stock purchase is worth \$11.01 billion.

The deal values Smith shares at a 25 percent premium to their closing price Thursday before reports of the companies' merger talks sent Smith's shares soaring. Smith CEO John Yearwood said the acquisition, which has been unanimously approved by both companies' boards, is good for shareholders.

BMO Capital Markets analyst Alan Laws has said the purchase would fill in the few gaps Schlumberger has in its

portfolio by adding Smith's leading positions in fluids and drill bit technology. In a note to clients Friday as speculation about a possible deal swirled, Laws said the acquisition would beef up Schlumberger's domestic U.S. operations with "mainstream services that are in high demand." He expects Smith's Wilson distribution business will be spun out after the deal closes.

Also Friday, Deutsche Bank Securities analyst Mike Urban noted that Schlumberger already owns 40 percent of Smith's drilling fluids business, M-I Swaco. Full ownership of M-I Swaco would fit with Schlumberger's goal of being the first or second biggest player in its businesses.

Schlumberger reported profits of just over \$3 billion on \$22.7 billion in revenue in 2009. Smith is less than half its size but still a significant player, earning about \$1 billion on revenue of \$8.2 billion last year.

The company employs more than 21,000 workers worldwide.

Because of overlaps in the two companies' businesses, Schlumberger said it expects to see pretax savings of about \$160 million in 2011 and \$320 million in 2012. Earnings per share are expected to benefit starting in 2012.

Schlumberger Chairman and CEO Andrew Gould said increased levels of drilling will be required to sustain world oil and gas production. Oil companies will be challenged to drill both more economically and in more difficult, hard to reach areas. Gould said the Smith deal allows the company to merge its expertise in measurement and steering capabilities with Smith's drilling fluid and bit technologies.

Smith shareholders will own about 13 percent of the

combined company once the deal is completed, likely in the second half of 2010.

The acquisition comes six months after Schlumberger rival Baker Hughes Inc. struck a \$5.5 billion cash-and-stock deal to buy BJ Services Co. — a move analysts saw as likely to touch off further consolidation in the oilfield services sector.

Capital One Southcoast Inc. analyst Pierre Conner said Friday that a deal between the companies would face a lot of scrutiny from antitrust regulators. The Justice Department has issued multiple requests for information on the Baker Hughes/BJ Services deal, which is expected to close sometime in the first quarter.



FILE - In this Oct. 18, 2007 file photo, a sign tower reaches toward the sky at the entrance to Schlumberger's Sugar Land, Texas campus. Oilfield services provider Schlumberger Ltd. on Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010 said it will acquire another major industry player, Smith International Inc., for about \$11 billion in stock.

(AP Photo/Pat Sullivan, File)

Goldman, Sachs & Co. and UBS Investment Bank and Baker Botts LLP served as Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen financial and legal advisers, & Katz advised Smith International. □

Stock market nears correction mode but pulls back

By TIM PARADIS,
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — Call it the almost correction. A jump in stocks last week is a sign that the market is stabilizing after a slump that began in mid-January. The drop sent the Standard & Poor's 500 index down 9.2 percent — short of the 10 percent pullback that generally defines a correction.

The clearest evidence yet of stocks' new strength came after the Federal Reserve said it was raising the interest rate it charges banks. The announcement didn't sink the market although it was the kind of news that only weeks ago would have sent stocks tumbling. The market's drop and latest bounce underscore the importance of occasional pullbacks, even if they can't be called corrections. Analysts worry when markets leap higher that investors are getting too optimistic, too complacent or too greedy. Those attitudes can set the market up for a plunge when economic or corporate news turns bad.

A correction might be healthy for the market but can be hard on investors. They start worrying that the slide will accelerate and turn into a bear market. That's a plunge of at least 20 percent.

The S&P 500 index jumped 3.1 percent for the week. That advance doused some of the concerns that investors would keep dumping stocks after a year of almost uninterrupted gains.

"You never know if it's going to be the pause that refreshes or the beginning of a new bear market roar until you get through it," said David Bianco, head of U.S. equity strategy at Banc of America Securities-Merrill Lynch in New York. Bianco is encouraged by the market's recovery after it neared the correction threshold. "We got there and then we rebounded," he said. "That strikes me as a good signal." The latest climb is all the more impressive because the Fed said late Thursday it would raise the discount rate, the interest it charges banks for short-term loans. The move is part of the central bank's plan to dismantle emergency supports it put in place as the financial crisis grew. Weaning the market from low-cost cash is necessary to head off inflation but clipping supports too soon could send the economy spinning. The Fed had earlier signaled its intentions about bank loans and analysts said the rate increase was in some ways just symbolic because it affects a small slice of loans. □

SPORTS

Aruba TODAY



Miller wins 1st gold by taking Olympic super-combi

CHRIS LEHOURITES

AP Sports Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Bode Miller finally earned an Olympic gold medal on Sunday, putting together a pair of flawless runs in the men's super-combined to complete his collection of jewelry from the Vancouver Games.

After finishing seventh in the downhill run of the two-leg race, Miller went all out in the slalom and bettered main rival Ivica Kostelic of Croatia with a winning time of 2 minutes, 44.92 seconds. "I skied with 100 percent heart. I didn't hold anything back," Miller said. "It's just awesome. There's nothing else to say."

Miller had been the most hyped athlete of the 2006 Turin Games, but left Italy empty-handed. Now, with expectations much lower, the 32-year-old American won a gold medal to add to the silver and bronze he has already claimed in the first two races in Whistler.

Although there were six medals to be awarded Sunday, most of the host nation's fans were concentrating on Canada's ice hockey team, which will face the United States at Canada Hockey Place in one of the most anticipated games of the Olympics.

Both teams are unbeaten after two games, but Canada trails by a point because the team was forced to a shootout by Switzerland.

In an early game, Russia beat the Czech Republic 4-2. Defending Olympic champion Sweden faces rival Finland in the late game.

In biathlon, World Cup



Gold medalist Bode Miller of the United States, center, looks down as silver medalist Ivica Kostelic of Croatia, left, and Switzerland's Silvan Zurbriggen, bronze, greet each other during the flower ceremony of the Men's super-combined at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Whistler, British Columbia, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.



Ladies figure skater Joannie Rochette of Canada works on her routine during a practice session at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010. Rochette is practicing, only a few hours after learning of her mother's death. Therese Rochette, 55, had a massive heart attack after arriving in Vancouver on Saturday and was pronounced dead at a hospital in Vancouver, said David Baden, Rochette's agent. Rochette's father, Normand, broke the news to his daughter at the Olympic village early Sunday. The women's event begins Tuesday with the short program.

Associated Press

leader Evgeny Ustyugov of Russia won the men's 15-kilometer mass start race. Ustyugov shot cleanly and finished in 35:35.7. Also, Magdalena Neuner of Germany won the women's

12.5K mass start for her second gold medal of the Vancouver Games.

"I knew I could win a medal, but now I have three," said Neuner, who also won the 10K pursuit on Tuesday

and took silver in the 7.5K sprint in her first Olympics. "That's incredible."

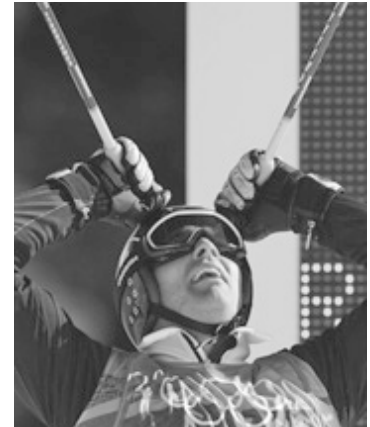
Ireen Wust of the Netherlands turned her bronze from Turin to gold in Vancouver by winning the women's 1,500-meter speedskating race, and Michael Schmid of Switzerland won the inaugural Olympic men's skicross event.

The men's two-man bobsled final was the last medal left to won later Sunday.

Miller also won two silver medals at the 2002 Salt Lake City Games, and his fifth Olympic medal overall added to his status as the most decorated American Alpine skier in history.

"The way I executed, the way I skied, is something I'll be proud of the rest of my life," Miller said.

Kostelic took silver behind Miller and Silvan Zurbriggen of Switzerland



Michael Schmid of Switzerland reacts after winning his semi-final heat in the men's skicross competition at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Associated Press

claimed bronze. Aksel Lund Svindal, who won gold in the super-G and silver in the downhill, led the super-combi after the opening leg, but he skied out of the slalom leg.

"I think slalom skiers for sure wouldn't have a great chance if the slalom course was simple," Kostelic said. "The setting was quite demanding, but not as demanding as it could be. But demanding enough so that the slalom skiers could make up time."

Also, the mother of Canadian figure skater Joannie Rochette died Sunday, two days before Rochette is to begin competition. She still plans to compete, and practiced only a few hours after hearing the news.

In curling, Canada's women's team beat the United States 9-2 to stay unbeaten, and Britain skip Eve Muirhead pounded a stone in frustration after giving up a four-spot to Switzerland in a 10-6 shortened nine end loss. It was Britain's third straight loss following a promising Olympic start. □

Querrey rallies to beat Davis Cup teammate Isner

CHRIS TALBOTT

Associated Press Writer

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP) — Sam Querrey rallied in the second tiebreaker and took advantage of a faltering John Isner in the third set to win the Morgan Keegan Championships 6-7 (3), 7-6 (5), 6-3 on Sunday.

Isner overpowered his doubles partner and future teammate on the U.S. Davis Cup team in the first set, but faltered after taking a 5-2 lead in the second-set tiebreaker. Two points from defeat, Querrey fought back for his third career title and first this season.

As expected in the tallest matchup in ATP history — Isner is 6-foot-9, Querrey 6-6 — both players served well throughout.

Querrey and Isner were set to take on Ross Hutchins and Jordan Kerr in the men's doubles final later in the day.

Querrey fought off three break points early in the match, including two in the first set, and was never broken. He won two consecutive points on Isner's serve to go up 6-5 in the second tiebreaker and took control from there.

Ranked 31st on tour, Querrey broke Isner to go up 2-1 in the third, then broke again to end the match.

Isner took control early in the second tiebreaker, building a 5-2 lead on Querrey's error on an easy return. Querrey screamed, 'Oh, God!' as the ball deflected off the edge of his racket and sailed wide.

Rather than derail him, though, the error seemed to invigorate him and he went on to win five straight points. He started with an ace to pull within 5-3. Isner hit the ball into the net on a return, then was long on the next point — his first real

mistake on his own serve — to make it 5-all.

Querrey chased down a drop shot by Isner and sent a forehand crosscourt to take a 6-5 lead before Isner again hit the ball long after a volley that featured some of the day's best back-and-forth action.

After that, Isner's formidable first serve began to falter. He hit 78 percent of his first serves in the first set and 65 percent in the second, but that dropped to 48 percent in the third. □

Sam Querrey, left, and fellow Davis Cup teammate John Isner talk after their tennis match in the Regions Morgan Keegan Championship in Memphis, Tenn., Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010. Querrey won the match 6-7 (3), 7-6 (5), 6-3.

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Ian Poulter wins WGC Match Play Championship



Ian Poulter, of England, holds the champions trophy after his 4 and 2 victory over Paul Casey in the finals of the Match Play Championship golf tournament Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010, in Marana, Ariz.

Associated Press

Miyazato wins season-opening LPGA Thailand

PATTAYA, Thailand (AP) — Japanese star Ai Miyazato rallied to win the season-opening Honda PTT LPGA Thailand on Sunday, holing a birdie chip on the final hole for a 9-under 63 and a one-stroke victory over Norway's Suzann Pettersen.

Miyazato, six strokes behind Pettersen after the third round, was 6 under in a six-hole stretch midway through the round, then birdied three of the last six holes to match the tournament record of 21 under set by Pettersen in October 2007.

"I didn't think of winning. I was just focused on my game and tried to do my best on the final round," said Miyazato, who earned \$195,000 for her second LPGA Tour title. She also won the Evian Masters last year in France.

"It was my lucky day as no matter what I did was right. This victory is a good start of the season for me."

Pettersen finished with a 70. She had a chance to force a playoff on the par-5 18th, but missed a 23-foot eagle try.

Miyazato earned \$195,000 for her second LPGA Tour title. She also won the Evian

Masters last year in France.

Taiwan's Yani Tseng (69) was third, six strokes back at 15 under. Karrie Webb (67) and Cristie Kerr (70) followed at 13 under, and Laura Davies (65), Maria Hjorth (71), Momoko Ueda (72) and Song-Hee Kim (73) were 12 under.

Top-ranked Lorena Ochoa had a 72 to tie for 18th at 6 under, and Michelle Wie closed with a 69 to tie for 22nd at 5 under.

"Wish I could have made a few more putts. Hopefully, I'll play better next week," said Wie, who added that her goals for the year were "to play injury-free and hopefully win a couple (of tournaments)."

Miyazato began her big mid-round run with a birdie on the par-4 sixth, then eagled the par-5 seventh and added birdies on Nos. 9-11 to cut Pettersen's lead to a stroke.

Pettersen dropped a stroke on the par-4 ninth with her first bogey of the tournament, but birdied the par-5 10th for the fourth straight day to push her advantage back to two strokes. Miyazato quickly countered, birdieing the 13th

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

MARANA, Arizona (AP) — Ian Poulter captured the biggest victory of his career on Sunday by leading the final 28 holes to beat Paul Casey, 4 and 2, in an all-England final at the Match Play Championship.

Along with winning his first World Golf Championship, the 34-year-old Poulter won for the first time on American soil.

"It's been a long time coming," Poulter said, after closing out Casey with a par on the 34th hole. "I knew I was in great form. I felt comfortable all day on the golf course."

Casey made sure Poulter didn't work up too much of a sweat. He struggled at times with his

swing in falling behind, and his short game wasn't good enough to allow him to catch up.

Casey became the first player to lose consecutive years in the championship match.

"Poulter played great," Casey said. "There were a lot of shots which I wanted to pull off and I didn't. He did a fantastic job of making putts and keeping the ball in play, and he kept the pressure on. And I got beaten."

Poulter won for the ninth time on the European Tour and moved to a career-best No. 5 in the world rankings. He earned \$1.4 million, the biggest prize of his career.

Known mostly for what's in his closet, Poulter quickly is gaining a strong reputation for his prowess in match play. He improved his overall record in the Match Play Championship to 18-7, and was so dominant over the weekend that he trailed for only one hole over the final 50 holes of the tournament.

That came early Sunday morning, when Casey put his approach shot to 7 feet on the second hole for an eagle that was conceded. Poulter answered immediately with a tee shot into 8 feet on the third, then took the lead for good at No. 7 when Casey went long and took two chips to reach the green, making bogey.

Casey, who earned \$850,000 for his runner-up finish, had the momentum at lunch after winning two of the last four holes to cut Poulter's lead in half to 2 up at the midway point. That didn't last long, however, for Poulter opened the afternoon session by winning two straight holes with birdies to restore his lead to 4 up.

Casey tried to make one more charge, winning the ninth hole with a par and the 10th with a 15-foot birdie. Poulter had a 2-up lead with eight holes remaining, momentum on Casey's side.

But Casey couldn't make up any ground on the par 5s, and Poulter seized control for good on the 307-yard 15th, where both players drove to the right of the green. Poulter nearly holed his chip for eagle, while Casey pitched just onto

the green, and his birdie putt to halve the hole caught the lip. Casey had to return early Sunday morning just to reach the final.

Resuming his semifinal match that had been suspended by darkness, Casey won with a par after Colombia's Camilo Villegas hooked his tee shot into the desert. Casey won in 24 holes, the longest match of the week.

Villegas missed a 3-foot par putt Saturday evening that would have put him in the final match. His tee shot Sunday morning was so bad that he let the driver out of his hand, and it bounced into a cactus bush. Even so, his attitude never wavered, and he bounced back in the consolation match to beat Spaniard Sergio Garcia 5 and 4.

Not only was the championship match between a pair of Englishmen, both were captain's picks by Nick Faldo for the 2008 Ryder Cup. Poulter went 4-1 at Valhalla, even though Europe lost the cup. The victory moves Poulter to No. 2 on the world points list for Europe, and atop the money points list.

He did all the right things in match play, mostly with his chipping and putting.

"I would say my short game, certainly this week, has been as good as it's ever been," Poulter said. "The last 12 months, it's been up there with the best of them."

Five times after Casey won a hole, Poulter won the next one. Late in the match as he was clinging to a 2-up lead with momentum still on Casey's side, Poulter flew the green on the par-3 12th, leaving him a tough chip up the slope. He came within inches of holing it, keeping his cushion, until he effectively put the match away at the 15th with another tough pitch, with mud on his ball, up a steep slope to the green.

"That's one of the nicest shots I've played in a while," Poulter said. The timing couldn't have been better. A short time later, Poulter was beaming as he posed with the "Walter Hagen Cup," the name of this WGC trophy. Hagen, along with his 11 majors, was known for his snappy attire. □

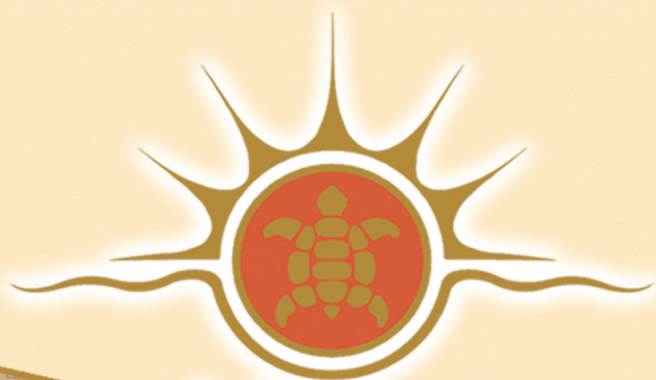


Ai Miyazato of Japan displays the winners trophy during ceremonies at the Siam Country Club following the final round at the LPGA Thailand tournament Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010, in Pattaya, Thailand. Miyazato defeated rival Suzann Pettersen of Norway to win the event with a final score of 267.

Associated Press

to again pull within one, and making another birdie on 15 to tie Pettersen at 20 under.

Pettersen fell back with a bogey on 16, then settled for a birdie on 18 after missing her eagle try. In her 2007 victory, Pettersen beat Davies with an eagle on 18 after blowing a seven-stroke lead in the final round. □



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Rafalski scores two, U.S. stuns Canada 5-3

ALAN ROBINSON

AP Sports Writer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — The United States pulled off its biggest Olympic hockey upset since the Miracle on Ice, stunning Canada 5-3 on Sunday to advance to the quarterfinals of an already mixed-up tournament.

Brian Rafalski scored two goals and set up another, and Ryan Miller held off a flurry of shots to lead the Americans.

One day short of the 30th anniversary of America's greatest hockey victory — the unfathomable win over the Soviet Union at the 1980 Lake Placid Games — these underrated Americans were faster, more disciplined and more determined than Canada's all-stars.

Better, too, even as Canada outshot the United States 45-22 yet couldn't badly dent Miller, the goalie the Americans felt could best stand up to all of Canada's stars. He did, too, making 42 saves.

Depending on the later Finland-Sweden game that concluded hockey's Super Sunday in Vancouver, the United States could go into Wednesday's quarterfinals

not only as a group winner but as the top-seeded team, something almost no one predicted when the tournament began.

Chris Drury and Jamie Langenbrunner scored to put the United States up 4-2 and hold off a relentless late surge by Canada that included Sidney Crosby's power play goal with 3:09 remaining.

Miller made an exceptional save on Rick Nash's shot from the slot with two minutes left to preserve it, and Ryan Kesler put it away by scoring with 45 seconds remaining. Rafalski, Langenbrunner and Drury are three of the older, steady hands on one of the youngest U.S. Olympic teams in history, one that averages 5 years younger per man than the 2006 team that didn't medal in Turin.

Canada, the gold medal favorite, was expected to coast into the medal round but now, after nearly losing to Switzerland and being outplayed on home ice by the Americans, must win a play-in game Tuesday to reach the quarterfinals. The Canadians still have a chance to win a gold medal, but now face a much tougher road that would include an additional game. □



USA's Chris Drury (23) is congratulated by Ryan Suter (20) and David Backes (42) after scoring a goal in the second period of a preliminary round men's ice hockey game against Canada at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Associated Press

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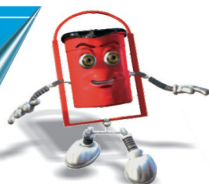


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Johnson gets break, wins at California

STEPHEN HAWKINS,
AP Sports Writer

FONTANA, California (AP) — Jimmie Johnson got on pit road only seconds before the caution flag came out, and held off a charging Kevin Harvick in the closing laps to win the NASCAR Auto Club 500 at California on Sunday.

After winning his unprecedented fourth consecutive Sprint Cup championship last season, Johnson started this season by finishing 35th at the Daytona 500.

With Harvick trying to get around him with three laps to go, Johnson moved to block. Harvick scrapped the outside wall and lost his momentum, allowing Johnson to pick up his 48th career victory, and fifth at his home track.

With Harvick trying to get around him with just more than three laps to go, Johnson moved to block. Harvick scrapped the outside wall out of Turn 4 and lost his momentum, allowing Johnson to go on to his 48th career victory, and fifth in 15 races at his home track.

“There’s no way of getting around how lucky they are,” Harvick said.

Johnson pulled onto pit road for his final stop with 26 laps left, while behind him Brad Keselowski spun out in Turn 4. When everybody else finally got to pit under caution, that made Johnson the leader and he stayed there the rest of the way.

“Fortunate came our way,” Johnson said. “I’m not going to lie. The fact that we were on pit row gave us track position and I drove my butt off.”

Jeff Burton, who finished third, was on Johnson’s bumper on the restart but never could get around him. He was eventually passed by his Richard Childress teammate Harvick.

Harvick cut the margin by more than six-tenths of a second in a matter of laps — from .983 to .311. He was making his move at the end of lap 247 of 250 when he brushed against the wall.

Johnson had won the last three fall races at California, but Roush Fenway drivers had won the last five February races on the slick two-mile superspeedway before Sunday.

Johnson led eight times for 101 laps and won with an average speed of 141.911 mph. It was his fifth victory in the last 11 Sprint Cup races.

Despite not winning, it was another strong showing for the Richard Childress Racing trio, with Clint Bowyer’s eight-place finish backing Harvick and Burton.

Richard Childress didn’t win any races — or even have a top-five finish — last season with four full-time cars. All three drivers finished in the top 11 at the Daytona 500 last week before another strong showing in Southern California.

Mark Martin, Johnson’s Hendrick teammate, finished fourth, followed by Joey Logano and Kurt Busch. Matt Kenseth started 20th and finished seventh with new crew chief Todd Parrott on his pit box, the best result for Roush Fenway.

Juan Pablo Montoya started in the front row beside polesitter and Earnhardt Ganassi teammate Jamie McMurray. Montoya had the lead by the end of the first lap and stayed there until Johnson went under him on the 30th lap.

Montoya was running 15th on lap 140 when the engine on his No. 42 Chevrolet blew up along the frontstretch.

Daytona 500 winner McMurray finished 17th. □



Jimmie Johnson rings a bell after winning the NASCAR Auto Club 500 race at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, Calif., Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Associated Press

NBA Roundup

Howard powers Magic to 101-95 win over Cavs



Orlando Magic center Dwight Howard, right, puts up a shot in front of Cleveland Cavaliers center Shaquille O'Neal, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Orlando, Fla., Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Florida (AP) — Dwight Howard had 22 points and 16 rebounds in a bruising

battle with Shaquille O'Neal as the Orlando Magic beat Cleveland 101-95 on Sunday to hand the Cavaliers their first three-game losing streak in two years.

Cleveland's skid comes on the heels of a 13-game win streak.

Howard was 8-for-13 shooting and added four blocks, and Vince Carter had eight of his 11 points in the fourth quarter to help the Magic beat Cleveland for the first time this season.

O'Neal made his first eight shots and finished with 20 points, and LeBron James had 33 points and nine rebounds for the Cavaliers, who were eliminated by Orlando in last year's

Eastern Conference finals.

Nuggets 114, Celtics 105

At Denver, J.R. Smith scored 16 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter as Denver recovered to beat Boston after blowing an early 20-point lead.

Chauncey Billups had 26 points and Carmelo Anthony added 23 for the Nuggets, who avoided back-to-back losses for the first time since late December with the victory over the NBA's top road team.

Ray Allen had 25 points and Kevin Garnett, Rajon Rondo and Marquis Daniels added 15 points apiece for the Celtics, who lost for the first time in their last four road games. They remain an NBA-best 20-10 away from home. □

Dutch cabinet falls over mission in Afghanistan

Dutch Pull-Out From War Expected



PM J.P. Balkenende

AMSTERDAM--The Dutch coalition government collapsed on Saturday when the two largest parties failed to agree on whether to withdraw troops from Afghanistan as planned this year, Dutch media reported.

Continued on Page B10

Queen Beatrix to decide on early Dutch elections

THE HAGUE - Queen Beatrix must decide today whether to accept the resignation of Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende after his coalition collapsed over the presence of the Netherlands' troops in Afghanistan. With a new election now looming, Dutch media strongly criticised the three parties in the coalition for failing to reach an agreement on the country's 1,950 troops in the international mission.

The queen will hold talks with Mr Balkenende, head of the Christian Democratic party (CDA), and the leaders of the Labour party (PvdA) and the smaller Christian Union (CU), as well as the presidents of the two chambers of Parliament. "Elections are likely to be held before the summer, by June at the latest," home affairs ministry spokesman Vincent van Steen said. Elections had originally been



scheduled for March next year. Nato had requested that the Dutch extend its mission by a year but the Labour party insisted that troops leave in August as planned. The Dutch troops are in Oruzgan province, where opium production is high and

the Taliban very active.

Meanwhile, Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said his government has made it clear it is not in a position to lead military operations in Oruzgan, reported the Australian Associated Press.

The Singapore Armed Forces has some 30 personnel - from a weapon locating radar team and a medical team - working alongside the Australian Defence Force in the provincial reconstruction headquarter in Oruzgan's capital Tarin Kowt. AGENCIE

Kiwanis Sonrisa AKTION CLUB as newest club in Kiwanis Family in Aruba



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Port-Au-Prince names Denis O'Brien Goodwill Ambassador

Digicel owner and chairman, Denis O'Brien, has been named as a goodwill ambassador for the city of Port-au-Prince in Haiti. The honour comes in recognition of Mr O'Brien's dedication to helping Haiti recover and rebuild in the aftermath of the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that devastated the city on January 12, and was bestowed on Mr O'Brien by the Mayor of Port-au-Prince, Jean Yves Jason and the Deputy Mayor, Nadeje Augustin. Since the earthquake, Mr O'Brien has been instrumental



in efforts to attract much-needed aid relief to the stricken country – as well as to encourage businesses to consider Haiti as an ideal place for foreign direct investment. Mr O'Brien said: "In my role as goodwill ambassador for the city of Port-au-Prince, I promise to do everything in my power to ensure that the plight of the people in Haiti is kept front of mind across the globe. I would like to thank the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for this prestigious honour. "Over the last few weeks, we have seen a massive worldwide outpouring of sympathy and support, but much more is needed. The challenge is to achieve

significant and sustained foreign investment and to ensure that this money is channeled into the right projects and succeeds in making a tangible positive long-term difference. With the right focus and planning, together, we can help Haiti to rise again." Mayor of Port-au-Prince, Jean Yves Jason, said: "Even prior to Digicel's launch in Haiti in 2006, Denis O'Brien has been a huge supporter of our country and has worked tirelessly to ensure a better standard of living for our people through the provision of housing, educational facilities and programmes. He is very much the right person

to help us to rebuild and to look to the future in a positive way. We are delighted that he has accepted this role and look forward to working together closely for the long-term benefit of the Haitian people." As the single largest investor in Haiti with a total investment of over US\$300m since its launch in 2006, Digicel has over two million customers in the country. The Digicel Haiti Relief Fund has donated US\$5m to NGOs in Haiti to support the relief efforts and, to date, over US\$800,000 has been raised by Digicel customers across the Caribbean and Central America through a 'text and voice' donation line. □

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Philipsburg Accord for new govt signed



By Alita Singh

PHILIPSBURG--The six political parties forming the new and last Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles signed the Philipsburg Accord Friday morning in Sonesta Great Bay Beach Resort, following just two days of negotiations. This was the shortest ever for the formation of any Netherlands Antilles government.

The task of the new PAR-led Central Government, to be headed by incumbent Prime Minister Emily de Jongh-Elhage, is precisely laid out in the 3½-page governing accord that was overseen by Informateur Pedro Atacho.

The new government is supported by 14 of the 22 seats in Parliament.

The priority points for the coalition when it takes office on March 26 largely remain the same as its present mandate, but with more precise emphasis on the continued dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles, support for the establishment of countries St. Maarten and Curaçao, and Dutch public entities Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, safeguarding the wellbeing of the people while the Antilles still exists, and completing pending tasks.

This government was put together in record time. These were the shortest negotiations to form a government ever in Antillean history, said Atacho, who has been informateur and formateur for the past four cabinets.

Signing the accord were Prime Minister Emily de Jongh-Elhage of PAR (Curaçao), National Alliance (NA) leader Commissioner William Marlin (St. Maarten), UPB-Bonaire leader Ramoncito Booi, Windward Islands People's Movement (WIPM) leader Rolando Wilson (Saba), Democratic Party (DP) St. Eustatius leader Commissioner Julian Woodley, and Faroe

Metry of PNP (Curaçao).

Together, the six parties will appoint a new cabinet of seven ministers and four state secretaries. The parties forming the new cabinet are almost the same as the outgoing one. Only FOL, led by Anthony Godett, will not be returning, as his party failed to retain its two seats in parliament in the January 22 election.

Getting the job done

De Jongh-Elhage said after the signing that the government would continue to work "like family" in the six to seven months remaining in the life of the Antilles. She also hoped that this new coalition would mirror the stability of the present one, which has not seen a crisis, as has happened often in the past.

"Whatever happens, the Antilles will fall apart. We will support each island with what they asked for. Nothing will divide us, and we will stay as friends – the five islands and Aruba. ... The touch we have, nothing will break us up," she said.

She added that as the biggest party in the coalition with six seats, PAR would do everything to ensure there was no more Netherlands Antilles and to help the islands obtain the best for their people.

PAR retained the prime minister's post and three other ministerial posts in the cabinet. These ministers will oversee Justice, Education and Public Health, and Finance. The prime minister will be tasked with general and foreign affairs. The party also will retain the posts of Minister Plenipotentiary in The Hague and Chairman of Parliament.

Best for St. Maarten

Marlin said that in the negotiations the National Alliance had focused on "achieving the best for St. Maarten."

The best for the island is "to ensure that agreements made so far will be realised" and St.

Maarten will receive the support necessary from its coalition partners so it can become a country within the kingdom on 10-10-10.

Under the Philipsburg Accord the new government will be required to give whatever support is necessary for St. Maarten to build up its infrastructure to receive the tasks of the Central Government as the dismantling process progresses.

Other past governments were referred to as the "last" for the Antilles, but what makes this one definitely the last is the agreement on the dismantling signed by the Netherlands, the Central Government and the Island Governments of St. Maarten and Curaçao, Marlin said.

"There is no doubt in our [NA's] mind or anyone's in this room, as far the political parties are concerned, that we will ... realise the constitutional change in dismantling the Netherlands Antilles," Marlin said.

The law on decentralisation was passed by Parliament on December 29, 2009, paving the way for the transfer of tasks to the islands. Now St. Maarten is awaiting approval of the law on early elections and the expansion of the Island and Executive Councils.

Marlin referred to the negotiations as "almost a walk in the park," because they had been wrapped up in just two days. The swift agreement on the new cabinet was credited to the commitment of all six parties to focus on the key issue of dismantling and the birth of the new countries and entities.

The status of country within the Dutch Kingdom is not independence, but it can be seen as a "steppingstone" to that, he said. NA holds all three Parliament seats allotted to St. Maarten, making it the first time St. Maarten has been the second largest coalition member with two ministers in the cabinet.

The NA-appointed ministers will hold the portfolio of Constitutional and Home Affairs, Transport and Communications. One of these ministers will also hold the rank of Deputy Prime Minister. The party will also keep the post of Deputy Minister Plenipotentiary in The Hague.

Partnership

Booi of UPB-Bonaire echoed Marlin's comments about the "last" government of the Antilles. "[This is] something I have heard before. We will maintain, ourselves, that it will



be the last government and it will take seven months to be accomplished."

He said that although Bonaire was having some difficulties at present with persistent efforts by the opposition to have another referendum on the direction of the constitutional change, "We hope with God's help we will finalise them in a proper way that we also can continue doing what we have to do for our island."

Booi said he and veteran politician and parliamentarian-elect Will Johnson of Saba were "like weeds. You can't get rid of us." Booi and Johnson had both "retired" from active politics but re-entered the race for the January polls.

The Bonaire leader looks forward to finalising the process for his island along with Saba and St. Eustatius so that they can achieve the status of Dutch public entities "so we can have, for our people, a better way of living."

He added that, as De Jongh-Elhage had said, the islands had to continue to work together when they achieved their new statuses.

Booi said he was still leaving a space open for DP-Bonaire to join the new Central Government. "I would even go so far, without asking my party, that if it is needed, my state secretary they can get, because at the age I am, it is more important to be able to finalise the work that I am doing than to do local politics."

UPB will appoint the Minister in charge of Economic Affairs and Labour, and the State Secretary for Home Affairs. The Bonaire minister will also act as Second Deputy Prime Minister.

Free movement

Woodley of St. Eustatius said that even after the dismantling of the Antilles all parties would have to maintain good relationships, with specific focus on the free movement of people among the islands.

He, like many others in the Antilles, has warned against a repeat of the Aruba "situation" in the 1980s that saw Aruba imposing travel restrictions on Antilleans after it broke with the Antilles and became a country within the kingdom.

The focus, Woodley said, must also remain firmly on the date of 10-10-10 for the new constitutional statuses.

DP St. Eustatius will appoint a State Secretary for Justice in charge of the prison and police of the Windward Islands.

PNP of Curaçao will also have a State Secretary for Justice who will oversee the Court of Guardianship, the Youth Correctional Institutions and other similar areas. The party will also appoint the Deputy Chairperson of Parliament.

There were doubts on Thursday evening that PNP would accept a State Secretary, but the party's representative Faroe Metry, after consultations with leadership, signed the governing accord.

Wilson of Saba said the job ahead would not be easy, but with partnership the process could move forward so that his island could achieve its new status.

Saba appoints the State Secretary for Constitutional Affairs.

Completion

Informateur Atacho is now in a position, a week early, to present his report on this phase of the formation to Governor of the Netherlands Antilles Frits Goedgedrag. Atacho was scheduled to present this report on March 6, but will now do so on Saturday, February 27.

Once the report is presented, the governor can appoint a Formateur to wrap up the formation by vetting the ministerial candidates to ensure their personal interests (businesses, etc.) do not conflict with their posts or portfolios. The candidates will also have to be screened by the Justice system. □

Kiwanis Sonrisa AKTION CLUB as newest club in Kiwanis Family in Aruba



ORANJESTAD - Kiwanis club of Aruba took the initiative to start a new club in Kiwanis family in Aruba at the premises of Sonrisa. It will be known as Kiwanis Sonrisa Aktion Club of Aruba. Kiwanis Aktion Club is meant for adults with limitations. Motto of the Aktion Club is 'Where Development has no disability' and The Mission of Aktion Club is: To provide adults living with disabilities an opportunity to develop

initiative and leadership skills. To serve their community. To be integrated into society & To demonstrate the dignity and value of citizens living with disabilities. Officers of Aktion club run the club on their own and thus acquire planning & leadership abilities and team spirit necessary to work in a club like this. Aktion Club became an official Sponsored Program of Kiwanis International on

October 1st, 2000. Presently it is a very successful program and there are already 425 clubs the world over with over 8.500 members. In Kiwanis Caribbean Division, it will be first club and in entire Caribbean, Aruba is the third one after Jamaica and Barbados. Sonrisa Aktion Club in Aruba has at present 11 members and the Charter president will be Ana Maria Tabares. Director of Sonrisa, Ms. Angelique



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Perez will be the Club Advisor and Kiwanians Ilonka, Ruben, Newton and Prakash have taken it upon themselves to guide and support the Club in each one of their activities.

The Club was chartered by visiting Governor of Kiwanis from Eastern Canada and Caribbean District Mr. Gary Levine. It was assisted by Lt Governor of Kiwanis Caribbean division Bob Spellen, current president of Kiwanis Club of Aruba Jan Noordzij and Chairman of Club building project Prakash Gupta. Present also were other Kiwanis Clubs like Palm Beach Club, Circle K at the University, Key Club at the Colegio Arubano, Builders Club at Juliana School as also parents and families of Aktion Club members, many kiwanians from Aruba and abroad and the press members. Hon'ble Minister of Education & Justice Mr. Dowers called for Kiwanis movement to work with other youth instances in Aruba so that some of Aruba's problems can be addressed much quicker and effectively. □

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PURE AWARENESS AT BUSINESS SEMINAR HEALING WELL FORMULAS



ORANJESTAD - Last week, Healing Well Formulas started her first business seminar of 2010 in Aruba with the subject "Vitality, full of energy through life". This three-hour business seminar was presented by a Life coach of Healing Well Formulas for about 100 employees of real estate developer FCCA, to celebrate their yearly corporate day, with the subject "healthiness in the business sector The goal of this business seminar was to create awareness about health, to discover success formulas in the business sector (personal as well as business-wise), to communicate better, to deal with each other in an easy and loving way and to respect themselves and their colleagues. Various workshops were held to give tips and examples where to improve in the (business) world and there was interaction between the employees. Between the workshops, meditation and letting go/breathing techniques were given, in order to get to yourself deeper and faster, so you can find serenity in a hectic working environment. Also Spa center New Image gave information and a demonstration how to detox your body through feet baths with warm water, connected to a spiral electrode. Healing Well Formulas is specialized in Mind, Body, Life, Mental & Universal and facilitates lectures, seminars, workshops, meditations and coaching sessions about pure awareness. □



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HUMAN HINTS

Positive Adversity

The three dimensional world is built on polarity. The world and universe as we know it is constructed of opposites. Beyond the physical realm, however, polarities do not exist. The intensity and type of vibrational frequency matters, but there is no good or bad beyond three dimensions.

When we remember this in our daily lives, we can use it to our advantage.

A powerful technique is to focus on your goal just

when it seems the most unattainable. At the moment of defeat, focus intently on the success of your goal. Shifting your thoughts and emotions to the positive will starve the negative energies and empower the positive side of your polarity. It will keep your mind focused on your successful future instead of your recent setback.

Your mind creates the three dimensional hologram based on the information found in your thoughts and emotions. Your thoughts and

emotions are the foundation of the hologram in which you live. As the generator of the hologram, the mind is completely neutral. It is a machine that creates this three dimensional, physical hologram based on the thoughts and emotions we feed it.

The system is a real-time instantaneous feedback loop. The hologram directly affects our thoughts and emotions, which are then fed back into the machine that creates the hologram. As humans, we have the ability to consciously change the thoughts and emotions that we feed into the hologram, regardless of what the three dimensional world is showing us. By changing our attitude toward our lives, we consciously affect the hologram that is our lives.

The hologram-generation machine is neutral. It does not know good and bad, positive and negative. It just creates what we tell it to by reflecting our attitudes back to us. Since the two polarities are just opposite sides of the same coin, the opposite energy is always present. When your goal seems furthest away, when

an unexpected setback crosses your path, reverse the energy in your attitude. Shift to the positive by thinking of your goal and knowing that you're already there. See your present moment from the future, and laugh at how meaningless the setback is.

Since all time is simultaneous outside of the hologram, there is an aspect of you that is already there. If you're tired of your life, you are aware of an old, out-dated mode of thought that will soon fade away. As your awareness shifts toward a fulling future, your old three dimensional patterns will disappear, to be replaced by whatever attitudes you embrace.

Resistance can either defeat or inspire us. When we shift from negative to positive at moments when things go badly, we starve the negative and nourish the positive. By changing our attitudes, we consciously transform our negative energy to the opposite positive polarity. Know that any setback or bad news is a step closer to your goal.

When you ask for change, don't fight it when it comes. Embrace the changes you

can't control, as they whisk you toward the future of your dreams.

Until Tomorrow...


Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought. HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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PG-13	LA VIRGEN NEGRA	daily: 6:45 matinee: 2:30	9:00 late show: 11:15	NEW
R	EDGE OF DARKNESS	daily: 6:00 matinee: 1:00	8:30 late show: 11:00	
PG	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS "THE SQUEAKQUEL"	daily: 4:00 matinee: 12:00	2:00 late show:	
PG	VALENTINE'S DAY	daily: 6:15 matinee: 12:30	8:45 late show: 11:30	
R	THE WOLFMAN	daily: 6:00 matinee: 12:15	8:45 late show: 11:30	
R	LEGION	daily: 4:45 matinee: 12:00	7:15 late show: 9:45 12:15	
AT PASEO HERENCIA				
R	FROM PARIS WITH LOVE	daily: 4:00 matinee: 1:45	6:15 late show: 11:00	NEW
PG-13	DEAR JOHN	daily: 6:15 matinee: 1:15	8:45 late show: 11:30	
PG	ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS "THE SQUEAKQUEL"	daily: 4:15 matinee: 12:00	2:00 late show:	
PG	PERCY JACKSON & THE OLYMPIANS	daily: 5:30 matinee: 12:00	8:15 late show: 11:00	
PG-13	IT'S COMPLICATED	daily: 6:30 matinee:	9:00 late show: 11:30	
R	THE BOOK OF ELI	daily: 6:00 matinee: 12:15	9:00 late show: 11:45	
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Matinee: sat - sun | Late show: fri & sat



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The French Steakhouse delivers dining under the stars



Eagle Beach – The French Steakhouse at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa just added another charming dining option, a tropical outdoor courtyard, featuring delicious cuisine under the stars. The famed French Steakhouse prides itself on the elegant dining experience it offers patrons in the fully air-conditioned dining room. Yet recently the idea of adding a garden spot to the existing blueprint began to sprout in the creative mind of Executive Chef George Hoek, and he immediately recruited the landscapers to create the

intimate, lovely setting. The French Steakhouse Ooh-La-La menu is now served indoor and alfresco, featuring creative appetizers, soups, salads, seafood dishes, poultry and the Pièce de Résistance South American & USDA Beef specialties. Among popular appetizers the chef's Tropical Crab Cakes with pineapple & mango salsa and the Teriyaki Glazed Seared Duck Breast, served with garden greens and balsamic dressing, are real crowd pleasers. True to the restaurant's French roots, the Onion Soup

is a classic, while the Honey Glazed Salmon Salad winks at the exotic East with a sweet soy dressing. The menu features a great variety of seafood dishes from fresh fish to the totally sinful and amazingly-decadent Caribbean Stuffed Shrimp with Crabmeat and Bacon, which became an instant hit. The tequila and sweet chili glaze, lends the Jumbo shrimp a pure taste of heaven!



The French Steakhouse is naturally famous for the South American Churrasco steak, a signature preparation, which now shares the stage with juicy USDA beef specialties such as NY Sirloin and Filet Mignon. Light-eaters will find the Jerk Chicken Skewers and the Lemon Herb Broilers very satisfying. Open seven days a week from 5:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. the French Steakhouse is blessed with the nicest staff and a delightfully renovated dining

room with sparkling China, crisp linen, an interesting bread basket, colossal desserts and live jazz on piano with Eddy Samson who is Aruba's best entertainer, and a walking & breathing music encyclopedia, just whistle the tune, and Eddy will produce a symphonic version of your favorite song. Hungry patrons will appreciate the Ambassador's 5-course menu featuring the run of the menu highlights for just \$34.95 per person. www.manchebo.com/steakhouse

Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar reinvents Beach Cuisine



Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano introduces Menu Turistico

Eagle Beach -- Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano located at the heart of the low-rise hotels at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa, delivers authentic Mediterranean flavors, at a reasonable price.

The restaurant has just introduced Menu Turistico a three-course dinner featuring appetizers, main courses and desserts for just \$19.95, per person, plus 15% service charge.

Patrons may choose between home made soup and Caesar salad, Fettuccini Alfredo, Lasagna Casarecia, Spaghetti alla Bolognese or any favorite pizza with Tiramisu, Cheese Cake or Ice Cream for the sweet finale.

Executive Chef George Hoek is the resort's much-appreciated culinary expert. He was the recent recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association in collaboration with the Digicel Group. Chef George accepted the Shoco Award, the national award of excellence, and Aruba's top professional decoration, in the tourism industry. □



Eagle Beach – Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa is widely recognized as the home of Beach Cuisine.

Executive Chef George Hoek and his culinary team serve a Sun Splashed menu on the ocean front terrace, raising the restaurant to a must-visit, must-try status.



The contemporary menu, lists many favorite dishes from around the world, borrowing inspiration from US, Mexican, Thai, Jamaican, Cuban, Greek and Mediterranean kitchens, all served with a tropical, Caribbean flair.

From Sun-Sational Salads, to

Cuban pressed jawbreakers and wraps, mid-day platters also include oversize Beef Burgers, Philly Cheese Steak Sandwiches and Hot Dogs.

The Pega Pega tropical & frozen cocktail list, with fresh fruit or ice cream smoothies, daiquiris, coladas and margaritas, leaves nothing out, including Yellow Birds, Sex on the Beach and Mudslides, making a lunch-time brain-freeze, extremely easy to get! The Pega Pega, one of Aruba oldest beach bars is open on fabulous Eagle Beach, with unrivaled views, caring, gracious service, and relaxed atmosphere, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. The bar is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. □



Fun-loving fundraisers agree:

Sweethearts Dinner Dance 2010 from Friends of the Handicapped is a hit!



PAALMBEACH- The Friends of the Handicapped, (FOTH,) staged another successful fundraising dinner dance at the Radisson Resort, Casino & Spa this past Saturday evening. For over twenty years, a steadfast group of veteran island visitors have dedicated their winters spent on Aruba to organizing enjoyable events, raffles and Superbowl lotteries, of which all the proceeds are donated to local foundations.

FOTH has distributed over one million dollars to island foundations dedicated to assisting the mentally and physically challenged,

elderly, children and also the Red Cross. The Sweethearts Dinner Dance is a Valentine's Day tradition where residents and vacationers mix and mingle; this year Oranjestad Carnival parade pushed the event up a week, but it did not dampen the festive mood of those attending in the least.

Radisson's Executive Chef Gerard Costa made it a point to personally supervise the sumptuous four-course meal featuring a surf and turf entree. Popular local band NBO provided a lively selection of musical favorites that filled the dance floor; from international golden

oldies to classic Aruban carnival songs.

FOTH's gold sponsors include Noble Jewelers, Playa Linda Beach resort, Cas del Mar Beach Resort, Kay's Fine Jewelry, Gemani Jewelers, Westin Resort & Spa, Colombian Emeralds, Trac Car Rental, and Rams Bijoux, all of which donated lovely prizes for the special raffle. Top prize of \$2000 cash went to Diane Horowitz, and Victor Hidish won the second prize of a week at Playa Linda Resort.

Nash Malwani of Noble Jewelers contributes each year a major piece of diamond jewelry, which rates its own special raffle. This

year, Valerie Yodell was the lucky winner of a stunning diamond ring appraised at \$3,200.

Elsa's Flowershop arranged the beautiful rose centerpieces and Romar Trading, TEC, Casa Haime, Aruba Trading and Playa Liquor sponsored the cocktail hour and provided the beverages included with the meal.

It was a traditional and convivial grand night out for couples and friends, thanks to the unstinting efforts of Friends of the Handicapped. Board officers are Art Stark, chairman, Philip Solomon and Maryann La Carruba, co-treasurers, Anoushka Maduro,



secretary and Pauline Daley, associate secretary. Board members include: Alma Stark, Marcelino Kock, David and Tana Ulmschneider, Sal La Carruba, Pat and Marsha Finck and Linda Todman, who offer a special thanks to steadfast volunteers Jean and Huguette Vatiquette.

In 2009, FOTH distributed \$44,000 dollars (77 Aruban florins) to island foundations, and hope to exceed it this year. There is one more fundraising event to take place this coming Thursday, February 25 at the Renaissance Convention Center; a gala bingo offering big cash awards (AWG 5000 final game!) and great door prizes. Cards can be purchased at the door for \$12, which covers ten games. Doors open at 5:00 PM and the bingo games begin at 8:00 PM. □



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PALM BEACH – The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan.

Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge.

The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers up a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but Texas de Brazil's version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, homemade soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, Texas de Brazil will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

Restaurant
open daily

Monday - Sat 6 pm - 11 pm
Sunday 5 pm - 11 pm

For more information or to make reservations, please call 586-4686. ☐



Adam Steinfeld live tonight!

Don't miss Magic & Comedy tonight at the Westin



STEINFELD: 'MAGIC LIVE!' Theater-of-illusions show... now at the WESTIN - Aruba, see it live! 9pm nightly Night Magic-Comedy- Master of illusions. PREPARE to Witness TOP-Class Illusions, Magic & Comedy on Stage. Adam Steinfeld's Magic Live!® show, at the WESTIN - Aruba... 'Sensational!', 'Amazingly Funny!'...the Hottest ticket in Town! A Must See" 'BEST MAGIC SHOW, I've seen in ages...and I hate Magic! - Carol Butz, Belair, Maryland.

'MagicLive!...is Hip-Comedy Entertainment, Adam is the ultimate Modern Magician' - Jacque Polak, CBS-TV. Steinfeld sophisticated card-sharp street magic, mixed with grand theater illusions is a visual feast...this will be the highlight of your vacation. -Al Blanchard, mystery novelist, Boston, MA.

Steinfeld's, comedy magician, likable on-stage personality, comic interactive-wit, and amazing magic, mixed with his dream-like theatre-of-

illusions, is a sensory overload of the imagination, along with his lovely dancers...a treat for the entire family.

SEE IT LIVE! On-Stage!

"It's obvious Adam's real passion is performing in front of a live audience, as his charisma and charm create an unforgettable show!" Steinfeld is a 'Master of Magic', he invents many of his own Las Vegas illusions that are designed in England, fabricated in Vegas, and travels with him on tour, in a explosion of amazing fun.

THE MUST-SEE SHOW - YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS IT! AROUND THE WORLD AND BACK, Adam Steinfeld: 'MAGIC LIVE!', from Monte Carlo, Hong Kong, Orlando, Miami Beach, Biloxi, Boston, San Juan, New York, Aruba to Vegas, it's the coolest show in town, taking up where Houdini left off." **MAGIC - GRAND ILLUSION - COMEDY**



IF YOU GO

What: Magic Live! theater-of-illusions show
Where: Westin - Aruba, palm beach (high-rise area)
Who: starring, comedy illusionist, Adam Steinfeld
Time: 9:00 pm, theater opens at 8:30pm
Tickets: at the door
Price: \$19.95 under 15, \$29.5 adults
Group Sales: 561-1090
website: www.MagicLive.com
Blog: www.MagicOnTheBeach.com

Dutch cabinet falls over mission in Afghanistan



Continued from Page B1

The ANP news agency and RTL television said Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende's cabinet fell apart after hours of talks that extended into the early hours of Saturday.

Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende said Sunday that he expected Dutch troops to come home from Afghanistan before the end of the year.

A last-ditch effort by Mr. Balkenende to keep Dutch soldiers in the dangerous southern Afghan province of Oruzgan instead saw the Labor

Party quit the government in the Netherlands early Saturday, immediately raising fears that the Western military coalition fighting the war was increasingly at risk.

Even as the allied offensive in the Taliban stronghold of Marja continued, it appeared almost certain that most of the 2,000 Dutch troops would be gone from Afghanistan by the end of the year. The question plaguing military planners was whether a Dutch departure would embolden the war's critics in other allied countries, where debate over deployment

is continuing, and hasten the withdrawal of their troops as well.

"The moment the Netherlands says as sole and first country we will no longer have activities at the end of 2010, it will raise questions in other countries and this really pains me," Mr. Balkenende told the Dutch television program "Buitenhof" in an interview on Sunday, according to Reuters.

The collapse of the Dutch government comes as the Obama administration continues to struggle to get European allies to commit more troops to Afghanistan to bolster its attempts to win back the country from a resurgent Taliban. President Obama has made the Afghan war a cornerstone of his foreign policy and, after months of debate, committed tens of thousands more American troops to the effort.

"If the Dutch go, which is the implication of all this, that could open the floodgates for other Europeans to say, 'The Dutch are going, we can go, too,'" said Julian Lindley-French, professor of defense

strategy at the Netherlands Defense Academy in Breda. "The implications are that the U.S. and the British are going to take on more of the load."

Dutch leaders had promised voters to bring most of the country's troops home this year. But after entreaties from the United States, Mr. Balkenende tried to find a compromise to extend the Dutch presence, at least on a scaled-back basis. Instead, the Labor Party pulled out of the government after an acrimonious 16-hour cabinet meeting that ran into the early hours of Saturday.

Mr. Balkenende told Dutch television on Sunday that he now expected Dutch troops to leave Afghanistan as planned. "If nothing else will take its place, then it ends," he said, according to Reuters.

The Dutch troops have been important to the war effort, despite their small numbers, because about 1,500 of them were posted in Oruzgan.

Analysts said that new elections in the Netherlands, as well as the departure of the Dutch troops, now appeared inevitable.

The war in Afghanistan has been

increasingly unpopular among voters in the Netherlands, as in many other parts of Europe, creating strains between governments trying to please the United States and their own people.

But the tension in the Netherlands also reveals how deep the fissures over the war have grown within the NATO alliance.

As the number of Dutch military casualties has increased — 21 soldiers have died — the public back home has grown increasingly resentful at the refusal of some other allies, in particular the Germans, to join the intense fighting in the south.

On Saturday, Mr. Balkenende informed Queen Beatrix, the country's head of state, of the government's resignation. According to the Dutch media, she was vacationing in Austria, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs said a decision about whether to hold new elections would probably be made in the next several days. By law the election would have to be held within 83 days of the queen's decision. □

Fine & Affordable Dining at Pam Pam Restaurant

Meet Chef Ludwich Samson and his exquisite menu now unveiled!



Nestled in the quiet neighborhood of Boegoeroei, Perle d'Or apartment complex houses Dutch students and vacationers, as well as a cozy garden eatery, Pam Pam Restaurant & Bar. Aiming to attract a more diverse clientele, Pam Pam has recently adopted a more upscale dining concept. In order to pilot this new concept, rising local chef Ludwich Samson was brought on board, and in just two months on the job, he has

more than proven his worth.

Laid-back, refreshingly young, and ambitious, Ludwich began his career as a chef by enrolling in Aruba's hospitality and culinary arts school—the best decision he has ever made, he wholeheartedly claims. With ten years in the kitchen and three years as a chef, Ludwich has developed an impressive arsenal of cooking skills. He attributes the majority of his growth as a chef to his years

of working under his mentor, Vittorio Muscarlello, owner of Hostaria Da'Vittorio and one of the most highly respected chefs on Aruba.

In his two months with Pam Pam, Ludwich has entirely remodeled the kitchen to make it more efficient. He has also created a whole new menu featuring particularly unique dishes in order to distinguish Pam Pam from the endless number of restaurants along Aruba's hotel strip. While the menu still offers Dutch snacks and typical Dutch platters like sate to appease the many Dutch interns residing at Perle d'Or, the rest of the menu offers upscale fusion cuisine. Lemon grass and chillies give several seafood dishes a Thai flair; homemade ravioli and beef carpaccio salute Italy; crustacean ceviche adds a Peruvian element; and Indonesian spices add zest to a handful of casual main dishes.

Ludwich also craftily adds little unexpected twists to some classic dishes, elevating the uniqueness of his menu. One of his personal favorites is his porcini-crusted filet mignon served with a thyme red-wine reduction. He also delights in the fact that most diners have a hard time figuring out the sweet and spicy deliciousness of his signature crustacean platter. Other interesting interpretations include lump-crab lollipops, chicken cordon blue unorthodoxly stuffed with ricotta and bacon, and for dessert, tiramisu that promises an untraditional layer of decadent Bailey's chocolate mousse.

Needless to say, Ludwich is creative in the kitchen and works extremely hard, currently putting in 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week; but he insists that this is not what makes a good chef good. "I simply love what



I do for a living," confides Ludwich, and this is what guarantees success in the kitchen and contented diners. Of course, being a chef can be downright stressful, but Ludwich thrives on the rush of adrenaline on busy nights. And when he peers out of the kitchen and sees a restaurant full of people enjoying their meals, he experiences immense satisfaction. For reservations call: 5877710 or 7483848, or visit us at www.pampamaruba.com. □

False security threat shuts down airport



AIRPORT--A false security threat shut down Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA), crippled Cole Bay/Simpson Bay traffic and grounded flights out of St. Maarten on Friday evening. Airport security evacuated hundreds of travellers, their families, PJIA staff and vendors from the terminal after an anonymous caller is said to have reported a bomb in the building at 5:47pm. Security corralled them in the parking lot opposite the terminal. Officials lifted the emergency status at 11:45pm after thorough checks in and around the PJIA terminal found nothing "that would pose a security threat," Government Information Services (GIS) reported.

PJIA reopens today, Saturday, at 7:00am. Some 25 flights were scheduled to enter and leave PJIA between 6:00pm and midnight, according to flight-monitoring Website www.sxmarrivaltimes.com.

Travellers and residents felt inconvenienced by authorities, who turned away drivers in front of a Simpson Bay restaurant and at the Maho roundabout, and

banned walking in front of the terminal building.

Traffic froze on either side of the airport as police ordered drivers to turn around for their own safety.

A young mother worried about her infant daughter's return on a flight from Curaçao that had been cancelled while authorities searched the building for danger.

Twelve firemen swept the terminal.

They combed every section from the basement to the parking lot and tarmac in response to the threat. It took nearly six hours of searching before they gave the green light to airport officials to reopen the terminal.

KLM, Dutch Antillean Express (DAE) and US Airways flights were grounded. Crews ordered passengers off the planes minutes after they boarded. "We were just finished boarding US Airways and we were on KLM when we got the call," a worker said.

Initial reports reaching The Daily Herald said a person had threatened a plane with a bomb. However, judging by authorities' response – more than a dozen police, fire and EMS cars rushing to the airport and almost-immediate

evacuation – the threat was more severe, said a source who is familiar with airport security.

"If it was on an airplane, then the tower would've called it," the person said. After air traffic controllers report a threat on a plane, procedure for responding to it is three-tiered: isolate the suspect aircraft, detain the person/persons making the threat, and inspect the plane for possible dangers: explosives, gases, and so on.

GIS said the caller had warned of a "security threat" to the airport, but didn't say whether "it was in the terminal building or on an aircraft."

"The result of the operation that started at 5:47pm and ended at 11:30pm is that nothing was found that would pose a security threat," GIS said. Officials refused to say what exactly the caller had said that had warranted a complete shutdown of the airport.

More than 250 passengers had been shuttled out of Simpson Bay to nearby hotels by 9:30pm, a car-rental agent told this newspaper. He was "about to leave work when this happened."

Two young women were headed to their shifts at Atlantis Casino in Cupecoy when fire, ambulance and police teams raced to the airport. On separate buses, they both noticed the wail of sirens rushing past them, but didn't expect it to interrupt their day's plans. "I was just



coming down to work and I was already late," one woman said.

Unfazed by the scare, the women stood under lampposts between the terminal and Winair's ticket office applying makeup from handheld kits. They still planned to go to work.

Many guests staying at Sonesta Maho Resort and other resorts and condos were forced to go through French St. Martin because the road was blocked. A model performing at a fashion show at a nightclub couldn't get to the club.

Customers at Crazy Thyme restaurant, which is opposite PJIA, stayed and ate. Police tried to warn them of danger, but they wouldn't budge. A French couple eating at the restaurant was curious about the search, but not bothered enough to give up their meal. Diners came and went in the more than three hours this newspaper covered the search.

Others watched from the roadside or sat on docks above

Simpson Bay Lagoon.

A woman walked into the airport to meet her sister and two-year-old daughter as security escorted everyone out of the building. "We were coming in and everybody was rushing out," the woman said. This newspaper did not know up to press time how flights would be reorganised to accommodate last night's passengers and persons leaving in the days ahead. At least one airline offered passengers vouchers for new flights.

Acting Lt. Governor Millicent Acuña Lopez-de Weever commended disaster management teams for their response. She was on site along with heads of police, the Prosecutor's Office and the airport.

GIS said only that authorities were trying to find out who had made the call. "Law enforcement agencies will continue to carry out their investigation with respect to the source of the security threat," GIS said. □





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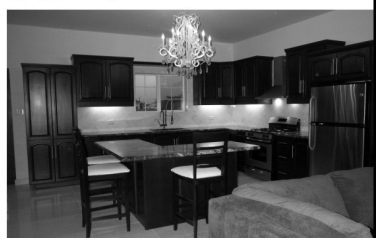
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Plantean creación de nuevo bloque latinoamericano

PLAYA DEL CARMEN, México (AP) - América Latina y el Caribe se acerca a la aprobación de una nueva entidad que agrupe a todos los países de la región y comience a funcionar formalmente hacia el 2011, informaron el domingo sus cancilleres.

Los ministros concluyeron el domingo un encuentro ministerial previo a la denominada Cumbre de la Unidad de América Latina y el Caribe, convocada para lunes y martes por el Grupo de

Río, durante la cual se espera que los mandatarios den luz verde a la conformación de un grupo que por primera vez reúna al más alto nivel a todos los países de la región para discutir y tomar decisiones en asuntos como la defensa regional.

El canciller ecuatoriano, Ricardo Patiño, informó a periodistas que aunque se avanzó hacia la creación de esa nueva entidad, aún falta por determinar el nombre específico.

“Lo que sí está claro es que sea ‘de Estados Latinoamericanos y del Caribe’, (aunque) la pregunta es si es organización, unión o comunidad”, dijo el jefe de la diplomacia ecuatoriana. “Lo mas importante es que va a ser el más alto foro político de discusión de los países de América Latina”.

En caso de que los mandatarios aprueben el nuevo grupo, aún quedará pendiente decidir los estatutos, las funciones específicas y si sería encabezado por un secretario general o presidente.

Patiño dijo que la idea es que hacia julio del 2011, durante una cumbre sobre integración prevista a realizarse en Venezuela, se aprueben los estatutos para que empiece a funcionar.

Mientras, el canciller venezolano Nicolás Maduro consideró que esa organización permitiría “ir articulando la unión de nuestro continente, la unión verdadera, donde puedan convivir durante algún tiempo los distintos mecanismos” existentes en el hemisferio. Dijo a periodistas que el grupo está pensado para nutrirse de la experiencia de mecanismos como el Grupo de Río, el Mercosur o el Unasur.

Los presidentes de la región comenzaron a llegar el domingo a Playa del Carmen, al sur

del balneario turístico de Cancún, donde por la noche asistirían a una cena ofrecida por el presidente Felipe Calderón, anfitrión de la cumbre.

La cumbre de la unidad fue precedida el domingo por un encuentro presidencial de México con los países de la Comunidad del Caribe (Caricom) y a la que asistió René Preval, presidente de Haití, país devastado por un terremoto el 12 de enero.

A su arribo al país, Preval agradeció al pueblo de México su solidaridad y apoyo luego del movimiento telúrico.

“Quiero decir de todo corazón, quiero transmitir el agradecimiento al pueblo mexicano”, dijo el mandatario a su llegada tras bajar de un avión del gobierno de México. “No tengo palabras para reconocer, agradecer a todos aquellos mexicanos que se entregaron con su apoyo al pueblo de Haití”.

El terremoto dejó más de 200.000 fallecidos y a unas 1,2 millones de personas sin techo, sobre todo en la capital Puerto Príncipe. El mundo se volcó con apoyo al pueblo haitiano, incluido México, que además de ayuda en especie envió personal para ayudar en las labores de búsqueda y rescate de sobrevivientes. □

Partido gobernante Brasil nombra:

Rousseff candidata presidencial



La brasileña Dilma Rousseff habla durante la proclamación de su candidatura presidencial apoyada por el Partido de los Trabajadores en Brasilia. REUTERS/Roberto Jayme

BRASILIA (Reuters) - El gobernante Partido de los Trabajadores (PT) de Brasil proclamó el sábado a la jefa de Gabinete Dilma Rousseff como su candidata presidencial en las elecciones del 3 de octubre.

Delegados en la convención nacional del partido en Brasilia nombraron candidata a Rousseff, quien había sido nominada por el presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. □

Panamá defenderá territorio de incursiones irregulares

PANAMA (AP) - El gobierno afirmó el domingo que defenderá el territorio panameño de la incursión de grupos irregulares, un día después que policías que patrullaban una apartada región fronteriza con Colombia se enfrentaron con hombres armados que viajaban en tres lanchas.

El Servicio Nacional Aeronaval (SNA) dijo en un comunicado que investiga la procedencia de las lanchas rápidas cuyos ocupantes viajaban armados y se enfrentaron a un bote patrullero en la provincia de Darién fronteriza con Colombia.

En el enfrentamiento un agente policial recibió un disparo en el muslo izquierdo y se encuentra estable.

La cancillería panameña afirmó en un comunicado el domingo que “se mantiene al margen de los asuntos internos de la República de Colombia, pero bajo ningún concepto permitirá que el territorio panameño sea utilizado en ninguna de sus partes por grupos irregulares para el narcotráfico y otras actividades ilícitas conexas”.

Agregó que las autoridades panameñas protegerán a todas las personas bajo su jurisdicción así como la “integridad del territorio nacional”. Y reiteró el compromiso

del gobierno en la lucha contra el narcotráfico y el crimen organizado en todas sus formas.

El SNA informó que el intento de fuga las lanchas encallaron cerca de la Isla Mono en la provincia occidental de Darién, por lo que emprendieron una búsqueda para dar con los hombres que estiman eran unos diez.

La entidad no ofreció, de momento, detalles sobre como se originó el incidente.

“En este operativo la embarcación patrullera ‘Ligia Elena’ P-302 sufrió daños, como consecuencia del intercambio de disparos con las personas que ocupaban las tres lanchas rápidas las cuales aparentemente habían salido de territorio colombiano”, señaló.

El incidente ocurrió a tres semanas que resultaron muertos tres supuestos guerrilleros colombianos en un enfrentamiento con policías fronterizos panameños que patrullaban una comunidad apartada en Darién. No hubo agentes heridos en ese incidente.

Las autoridades de seguridad, desde entonces, reforzaron la seguridad en la selvática provincia de Darién en donde frecuentemente se registran incursiones de grupos armados irregulares colombianos en poblados remotos. También son frecuentes los operativos costeros contra narcotraficantes. □

Presidenta Bachelet agradece apoyo de Guatemala para Insulza

TIKAL, Guatemala (AP) - La presidenta de Chile, Michelle Bachelet, agradeció el domingo a su colega guatemalteco Alvaro Colom el apoyo ofrecido por este país al chileno José Miguel Insulza, quien busca reelegirse como secretario general de la OEA.

“Desde el año 700 después de Cristo no era recibido un jefe de estado en esta ciudad”, dijo Colom durante un breve discurso luego de rendirle honores de estado a la mandataria chilena frente a la imponente pirámide del “Templo IV” de Tikal, una de las ciudades estado más importantes de la cultura maya.

Los mandatarios intercambiaron los instrumentos del tratado de libre comercio, un acto meramente protocolario, pues el acuerdo comercial ya está en vigor desde finales del 2009 luego que el congreso de Guatemala ratificó el texto.

“Ahora los guatemaltecos pueden comprar

vino chileno sin impuestos”, dijo la presidenta, provocando la algarabía de los presentes.

Ambos mandatarios sostuvieron una reunión privada antes del acto oficial, y después de éste recorrieron las ruinas de este sitio arqueológico, ubicado a unos 300 kilómetros al norte de la capital.

Bachelet _que el 11 de marzo entregará la presidencia al mandatario electo Sebastián Piñera_, llegó el sábado a Guatemala tras una breve visita a Haití, donde se reunió con el presidente Rene Preval para analizar la situación en el país caribeño tras el devastador terremoto del 12 de enero.

La presidenta partió de Guatemala la tarde del domingo con rumbo a Cancún, en México, donde participará en la denominada Cumbre de la Unidad América Latina y el Caribe, convocada por el Grupo de Río. □



La presidenta chilena Michelle Bachelet, a la izquierda, escucha las explicaciones de su colega guatemalteco Alvaro Colom sobre las ruinas mayas de Tikal. A la derecha la primera dama Sandra Colom. Tikal, Guatemala, domingo 21 de febrero de 2010. (AP foto/Moises Castillo)

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